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SUPER PLAY

ISSUE 47

SEPTEMBER 1996

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Hard luck, chums!

BYE, ALL!
Just thought we'd waste this last little bit of space to say goodbye to all those who read this small but nonetheless significant part of the mag each month. For that, you get your own special thank you.

Super Play comes from the same office as *Sega Power*, *GamesMaster*, *The Official PlayStation Magazine*, *Playstation Power*, *Cycling Plus* and *Total!*, and we're friends with *Amiga Power*, *PC Review*, *First XV*, *PC Gamer*, *.net*, *Arcane* and *SFX*.

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All letters submitted from this date will be dumped in a big yellow skip in Monmouth Street which has been hired for the specific purpose of clearing the *Super Play* office.

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Future PUBLISHING

THE SUPER PLAY EDITORIAL

from the BIG CHAIR

Our full contents listing starts just over the page

As one door opens, another closes. Two huge pieces of news this month for *Super Play* fans. The first is that with the Nintendo 64 now comfortably installed in our office we can assure you that the long-awaited machine more than lives up to its promise. The second piece of news is that... no... I'm going to save that till last, lest I distract your mind from the other goodies inside.

We've been playing *Mario 64* and *Pilotwings 64* non-stop since we got our hands on them. And whaddya know? They've turned out to be two of the most addictive games we've ever played. Both are truly astounding examples of gameplay honed to perfection. Turn to our showcases starting on page 14. Never before have you seen the like.

We've a stack of features, ranging from an article on that special thing which Howard Lincoln dubbed "Nintendo's secret weapon" to the worst games available for your SNES. And – hey! – there are even some SNES reviews tucked away amid all the excitement, just for the hell of it. And, specially for RPG fans, we've run a classic guide to the – now legendary – *Zelda* game. This is the definitive guide to finding everything you need in the game...

As for that other bit of news I promised you earlier. Well, it is with heavy heart that I have to break some sad news to you. As from this issue, *Super Play* will be no longer. It will be gone from your lives forever. We know nothing can make up for such a loss, but we promise that if the N64 ever arrives in the UK there will be a mag in which the *Super Play* spirit lives on... But you'll just have to wait and see.

I guess that just about winds it up for me. Hopefully this will be the last time that I ever have to say hello and wave goodbye in the short space of a few paragraphs. But fortunately for you, if you turn the page you'll find the end is just beginning...

Alison Harper
Editor

INDEPENDENT SNES AND NINTENDO 64 MAGAZINE

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MARIO 64 and PILOTWINGS 64

page 14

The first two games for the N64 showcased! Does the new system live up to the hype? You bet it does!

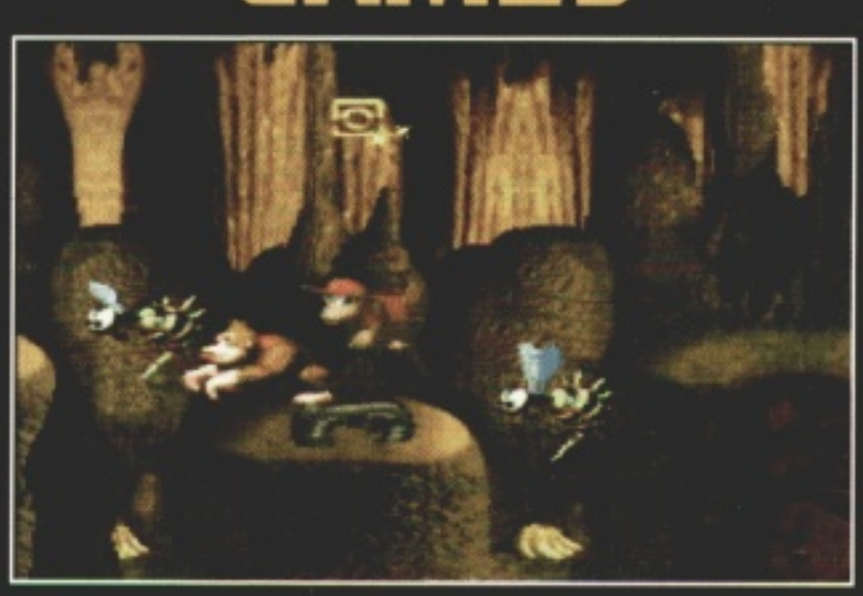
STINKERS!

page 42

Super Play **investigates the cheesiest games ever to blight the SNES!**

LEAP INTO...

PLATFORM GAMES



This is *the* definitive guide to platform games on the SNES. Miss it at your peril!

SUPER

EASTER 1997 UK N64?

Details of another delay for the UK N64 release have been leaked to Super Play this month... Just what on earth is going on?

Not wholly unexpectedly, yet a bit surprising when you consider what was said at the E3 expo only last month, comes the news that the N64's European release may be delayed until as far back as Easter 1997. When contacted, THE Games declined to comment on the rumours, which perhaps suggests that, sadly, they hold some truth.

The leaked Nintendo inter-office memo (dated the 12th June, 1996), in which Mr. Yamauchi – President of Nintendo Japan – was making a presentation to analysts, contained the following (we've recounted the main points it made in a word-for-word format):

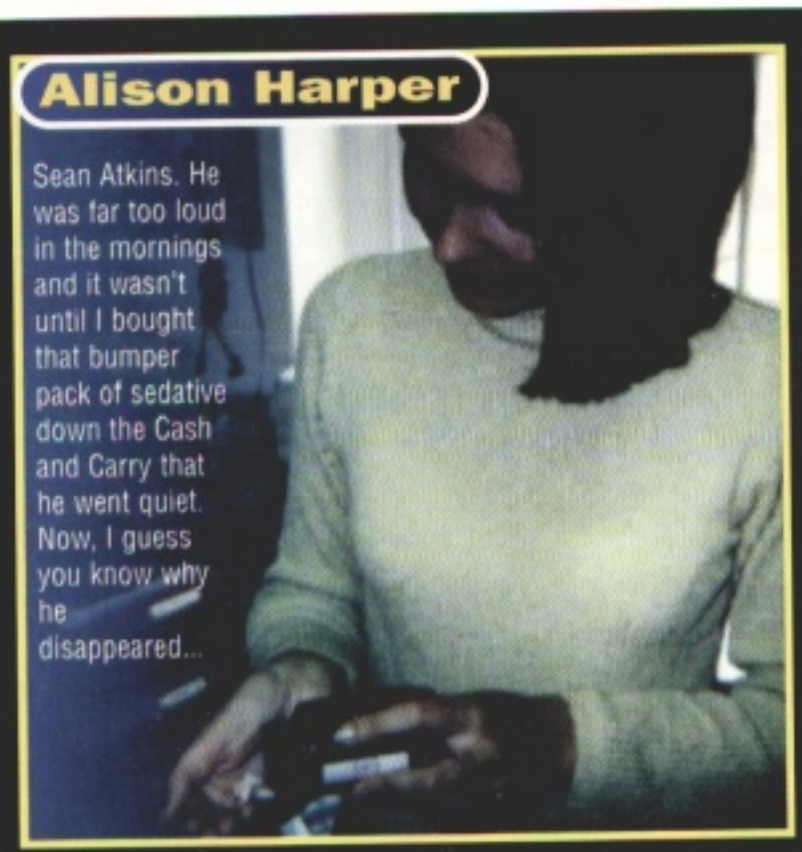
- Nintendo will not be able to introduce the N64 in Europe this year.
- Nintendo will announce more details about over 20 titles to be introduced in July.

But I have to admit that if there are three games that can match *Mario 64*, we will be

PROFILES

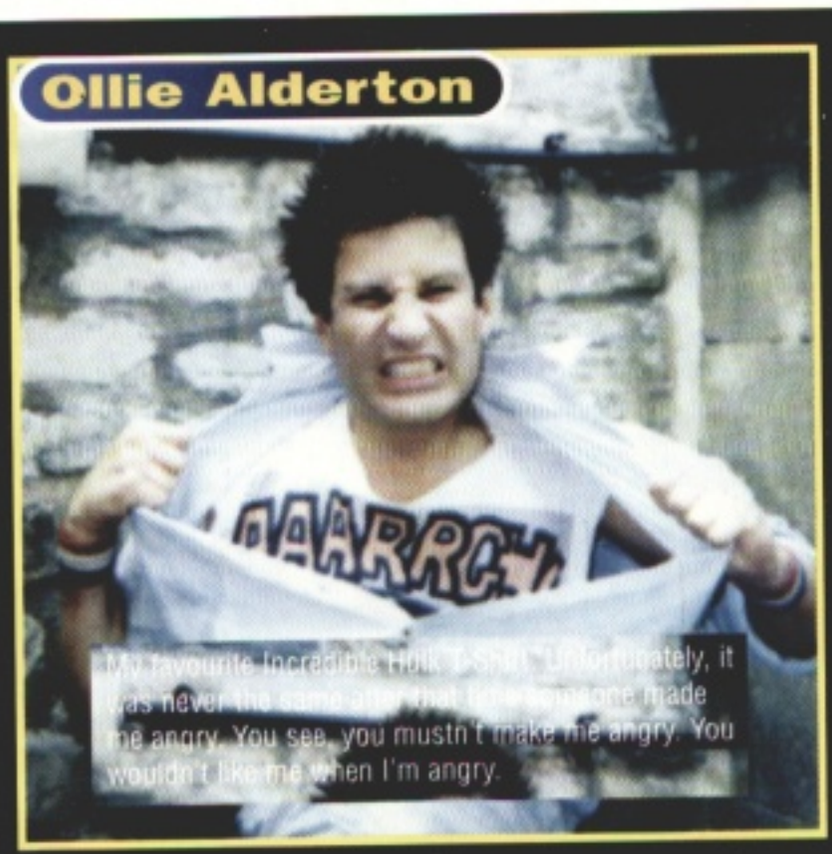
What with this being Super Play's final issue we thought we'd recount other great things that had to come to an end...

Alison Harper



Sean Atkins. He was far too loud in the mornings and it wasn't until I bought that bumper pack of sedative down the Cash and Carry that he went quiet. Now, I guess you know why he disappeared...

Ollie Alderton



My favourite Incredible Hulk T-Shirt. Unfortunately, it was never the same after that [illegible] made me angry. You see, you mustn't make me angry. You wouldn't like me when I'm angry.

FOR

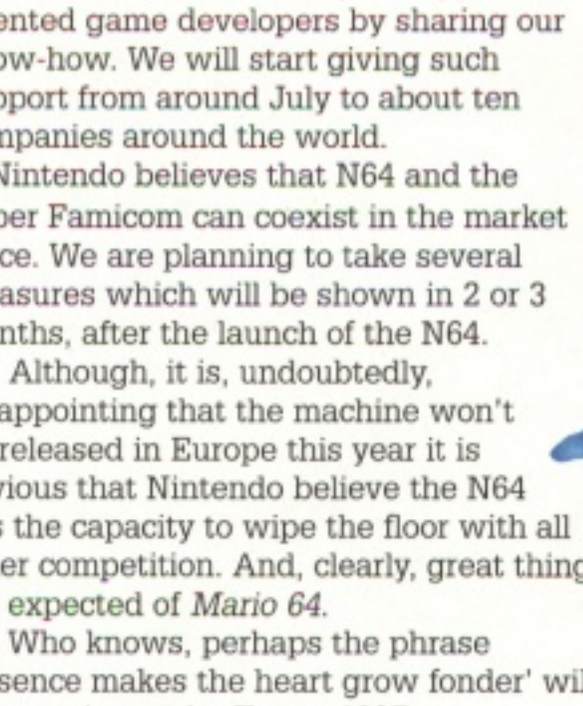
fortunate. This means that the industry does not have developers as skilled as ours.

- I can say there won't be many games which can compete with *Mario 64*. Once you get accustomed to this level of sophistication you may find other software boring.
- Some may say that Nintendo has set the hurdle for N64 development very high but such comments simply show that the level of developers is low.
- It is important to improve developers' abilities. Nintendo is ready to support talented game developers by sharing our know-how. We will start giving such support from around July to about ten companies around the world.
- Nintendo believes that N64 and the Super Famicom can coexist in the market place. We are planning to take several measures which will be shown in 2 or 3 months, after the launch of the N64.

Although, it is, undoubtedly, disappointing that the machine won't be released in Europe this year it is obvious that Nintendo believe the N64 has the capacity to wipe the floor with all other competition. And, clearly, great things are expected of *Mario 64*.

Who knows, perhaps the phrase 'absence makes the heart grow fonder' will prove quite apt by Easter 1997...

Tim Weaver



Take That. Such lovely boys. Okay, so their last single wasn't great but 'Back For Good' and 'Never Forget' were classics of our time. And all that Boyzone malarky, well, it's just not cricket,

DKC3 Revealed!

Rare, this month, released the first substantial collection of *DKC3* screenshots.

The game already looks graphically stunning and the company's claim that there is over 100 hours of play contained in the game can't be disputed. *DKC3* is huge! For a massive six-page preview see the current issue of Super Play's sister mag, *Total!*.

Have a gander at this if you want to see more!

Aww... look at that sweet little curl on his head.

Much leaping and bounding is to be had, much like in the previous instalments...

It should appear Stateside before Christmas.

COME IN FROM THE GOLD

Except for the delightful *Stunt Racer* and the equally good *Starfox*, the much-hyped Super FX chip has been surprisingly underused on the SNES, considering its undoubted technical capabilities.

This month, however, THE attempt to redress the balance with *Winter Gold*. The game allows the player to compete in six Winter Olympic events including snowboarding, ski jumping, bobsleighing, luge, downhill and aerials. Up to eight players can compete at any one time and, because of the chip, the polygons contained in the game move at a terrific rate. The game should be available in a couple of months.

The downhill skiing section is fast and furious.

Ahh... there's nothing like a nice bit of rendered artwork.

COMPO WINNERS

The ten winners of the *Gunsmith Cats* compo which we ran in the July issue were: Monir Aithaj, London; Annette Worsfold, Luckfield; Paul Brown, South Stanley; Jonathan Axup, Ripley; Barry Jeffree, Berkhamsted; Edward Sargeant, Reading; Sindy Chan, Manchester; Paul Cheong, Lewisham; Jean Curtis, Isfield; and Mr J New, Accrington. A bundle of goodies is on its way to each of you.

Top Nintendo Mag To Close

The Nintendo world was in shock this month at the announcement that top system title, *Super Play*, was to close after four years.

Editor Alison Harper called it, "a tragedy", whilst Art Editor, Ollie Alderton commented, "I think I'm going to cry". Former employees also paid their respects. Wil Overton, who worked on the mag for approximately 157 years, said of the closure: "It's a travesty of justice, know what I mean?"

But, never fear – all team members have been found new homes. Alison is deserting the world of video games and is rushing off to work on a new magazine called *T3* which'll be covering all kinds of consumer technology. Ollie has been transferred to a host of sports titles, including *Football Italia*, *Total Football* and *First XV*. Tim is continuing his sterling work in the field of video games over on *Total!* magazine. But, what about that Wil Overton chappie, we hear you ask, well... Wil is to be found over on that there *GamesMaster* magazine, where he'll be keeping an eye on their Nintendo 64 coverage and making sure it comes up to the standards he has become used to here on *Super Play*.

For a tribute to the best SNES mag the world has ever seen turn to page 70. The world won't be the same without it...

Never again will those beautifully crafted editions appear on shelves across the land.

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TWO MORE FROM TITUS

OSCAR

Unashamedly unadventurous. That's what *Oscar* is. But whilst originality might take its place at the back of the queue, fun and cuteness do the old French tourist trick and barge their way to the front, responding to cries of 'that simply won't do!' by pretending that they haven't heard you or – worse! – not understood your pleas for conformity.

Of course, fun and cuteness won't aid the game in its quest for prizes and plaudits, but it does mean that software companies can fend you off with tried and tested favourites such as 'it's more for the younger gamesplayer, you know?' in an effort to justify the fact that the game looks and plays, well, a tad unoriginally.

Not that we're passing judgment on this preview version of *Oscar*. Oh no. That wouldn't be right. But we're not going to regurgitate the normal preview speak either. Oscar isn't a new game, you see. It appeared about a year ago in a similarly close-on-finished format but, sadly, lost itself on the way to your local games emporium shortly after. It has, therefore, already been given the once over in Issue 31.

If, however, you're one of the many who will no doubt be struggling to recall specifics then here's an explanation for you: the object of the game is to work your way through seven film-themed worlds, collecting a set number of Oscars and dispatching baddies with a surprisingly lethal yo-yo. All standard platform fare, I think you'll agree, but, no doubt, one of those games you could come to quite enjoy.

And as has become the accepted norm for this type of seen-it-all-before platformer, the graphics have been perfectly drawn and the sound made to fit quite snugly into the celluloid feel of the game. The main character is also worth mentioning because, aside from the fact that he's obviously been through the cloning process that preceeds most platformers these days, he packs a couple of amusing poses and

THE CHARTS

Compiled by: Chart-Track
© ELSPA

ChartTrack

For weekly UK SNES chart updates you can either tune in to Digitizer, Teletext page 470, Channel 4 or use your Dad's PC to read the Super Play page on the Internet at http://www.futurenet.co.uk

These days the SNES charts appear to be even more static than a Littlewoods pullover.

OFFICIAL UK SUPER NINTENDO CHART

1	DIDDY'S KONG QUEST	Nintendo	SP40 82%
2	KILLER INSTINCT	Nintendo	SP36 85%
3	YOSHI'S ISLAND	Nintendo	SP36 94%
4	FIFA SOCCER '96	Electronic Arts	SP37 84%
5	SUPER METROID	Nintendo	SP25 91%
6	DONKEY KONG COUNTRY	Nintendo	SP27 90%
7	SUPERSTAR SOCCER DELUXE	Konami	SP38 94%
8	SUPER INTERNATIONAL CRICKET	Nintendo	SP33 77%
9	TOY STORY	T•HQ	SP43 79%
10	SUPER PUNCH OUT!	Nintendo	SP27 90%

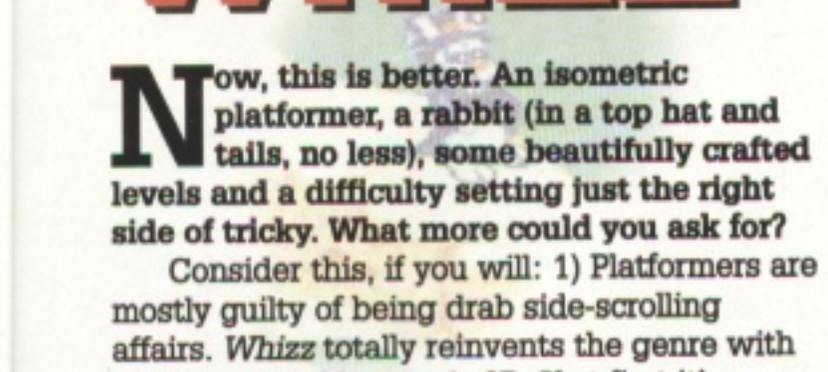
a fairly substantial collection of actions.

Oscar won't add anything to the genre. Of that you can have no doubt. But in a you-won't-admit-it-to-your-mates kind of way, it could actually be rather enjoyable. Who knows how these things can turn out, eh?

WHIZZ

Now, this is better. An isometric platformer, a rabbit (in a top hat and tails, no less), some beautifully crafted levels and a difficulty setting just the right side of tricky. What more could you ask for?

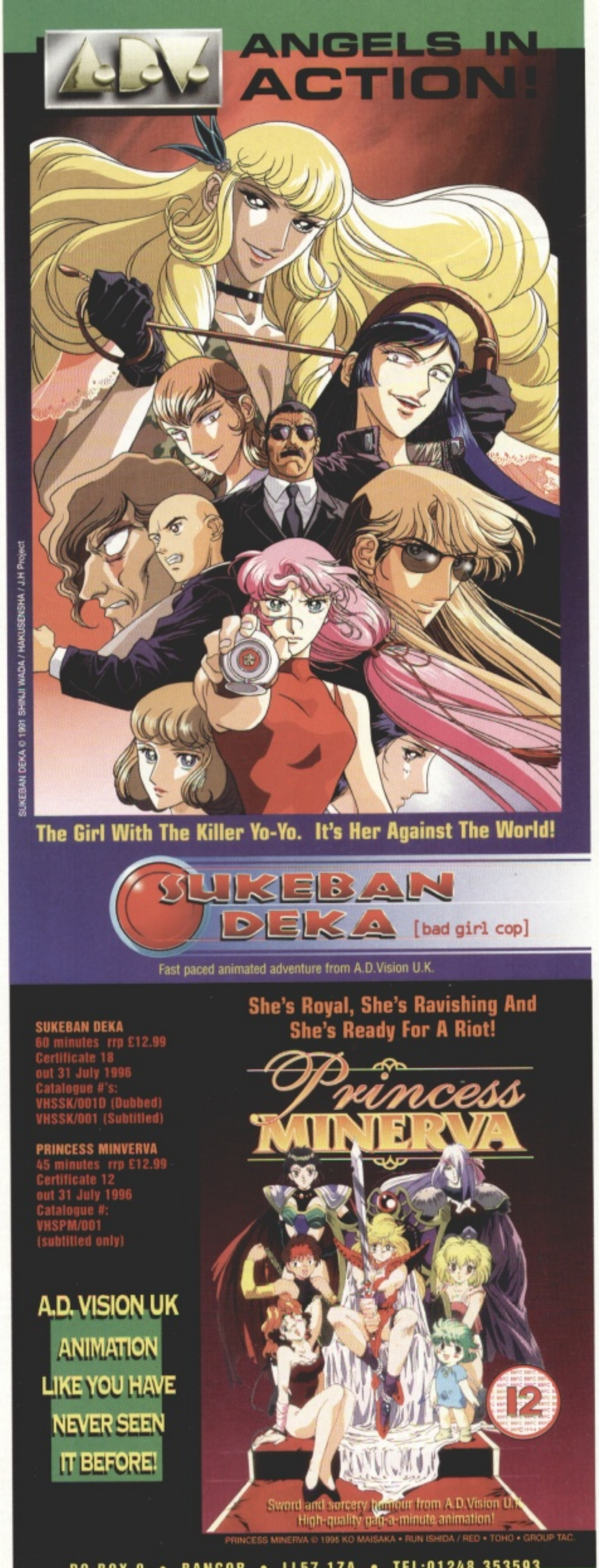
Consider this, if you will: 1) Platformers are mostly guilty of being drab side-scrolling affairs. *Whizz* totally reinvents the genre with a clever use of isometric 3D. If at first it's hugely frustrating, once you've grasped the control system, you come to realise its actually hugely innovative. 2) The levels are beautifully crafted. Titus have obviously spent time constructing the environments. In short, *Whizz* looks fabulous. 3) Platformers are generally guilty of being far too easy. Thankfully, *Whizz* is, what's technically known as, a 'challenge'.



The game is certainly shaping up well. Eleven worlds have been developed with three levels contained within the confines of those worlds. The playing arenas have been intelligently thought out with a gradual progression in difficulty and time constraints. The player is required to complete the individual stages in a race against the clock (which, it must be said, isn't charitable in the least) and can utilise a 'spinability' factor which enables him to rid the screen of selected baddies.

If you find yourself recalling *Whizz* with a similar amount of clarity to *Oscar* then that can be put down to the fact that it first appeared at the same time as *Oscar* but once again failed to make the transition to a reviewable format.

Both should definitely be available for review next month. Probably.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ANIME WORLD

Pronounced 'ahh-nee-may'

Taro Maki Interview

By Helen McCarthy

Producer Taro Maki has been a major force in Pioneer's recent success in the anime market in Japan and overseas, producing such hit titles as *Armitage III*, *El Hazard*, and, of course, his own personal favourite, *Tenchi Muyo Ryo Oh Ki*. He's accustomed to making hits – he came to the company from Tohokushinsha where he produced both *Patlabor* movies.

Yet he didn't have any intention of going into the animation industry, or even the entertainment industry. He majored in law at university and laughingly claims that he went into the anime business purely because the only job offer he got came from a production house. (It's quite usual in Japan for students to take a 'general' course, like law, politics or economics, and then go into another field altogether, because most Japanese companies expect to train candidates 'on the job' in industry-specific skills.) His first job was as a salesman for studio facilities, hunting down new clients and business opportunities for his company among producers looking for places to make the huge number of hours' programming required by the hungry Japanese TV industry every year.

Now he travels extensively, promoting Pioneer's work in the ever-expanding anime market. In London, en route for mainland Europe, Mr. Maki stopped off for tea and an interview with Helen McCarthy.

HM: When did you first become interested in being a producer? Did that develop out of your other work, or was there a definite point at which you decided to follow this path?

TM: To answer this question I should really explain what I mean by a producer. There are lots of so-called producers in the world who are only really concerned with one part of the creative side of production, actually making the show. In my dictionary, that's not really a producer. To make a hit, to make sure the programme is a success, is the real job of the producer. I think that, based on this understanding of the role, I gradually realised that I wanted to be a producer because I wanted to make a success of the shows I worked on.

More Tenchi Muyo Ryo Oh Ki! Pretty wild hairdos apart from the clean-cut chappie on the right...

HM: I think I understand; if you want to make better programmes you have to get into a position where you are in control of that process.

TM: Yes. A producer's real work is to ensure his programmes are successful and reach the biggest possible audience. To get an interview like this is one aspect of my job!

HM: Here in the UK, most people are very ignorant about the whole process of making anime, so many fans will want me to ask what a producer actually does.

TM: Well, as I said, there are two kinds of producers. One is a kind of general producer, like me, the other is specifically working on an individual production. His main role is to control the production side – staff, scheduling, and money for the actual production costs – and to ensure the programme is completed. My role is the other kind, the more general kind. I don't only take care of the schedule and finances, but also control the publicity side, the promotion and so on, using the characters and spreading the image so that the title becomes established in the character business, working with licensing companies and so on.

HM: So in a way, you control the way the characters and the show interact with the real world?

TM: Yes, I'm a kind of creator of the concept, the appeal of the characters. I work with the line producer to make sure the show is properly made, but I also take it out into the world and make sure audiences are aware of it in the best possible way.

HM: It's an interesting difference. Since you've worked on big cinema productions for Tohokushinsha, like the two *Patlabor* movies, and on many OVAs as well, let me ask you if there's any difference in the task of producing for cinema and for video – or is it simply a difference of scale?

TM: The two are completely different. When making OVAs, obviously it's very important whether the title sells or not, but the income comes just from merchandising and distribution, so it's quite straightforward. When producing a film, I also have to be involved with the theatrical side,

negotiating with the various cinema chains. I have to find the right theatres, negotiate scheduling so the film is in the theatres at the right time, sort out how much is to be spent on publicity and what kinds of publicity to use, and so on. There's lots of negotiation to be done! For video, of course, you have to consider scheduling, advertising and budget, but the distribution route is well established. Film involves lots of third parties and it can also involve a lot of industry politics. I think it's the same here, in the UK cinema industry, isn't it?

HM: Yes, it is. Do you prefer to work on OVAs or films?

TM (laughing): Definitely films!

HM: Here in the UK, *Ghost in the Shell* has been out in the cinema and on video. It was a huge undertaking, with four international partners in the production. Do you think that more Japanese production companies are going to go down that route of seeking international partners for co-productions, or is that not so important given how good the Japanese domestic market is?

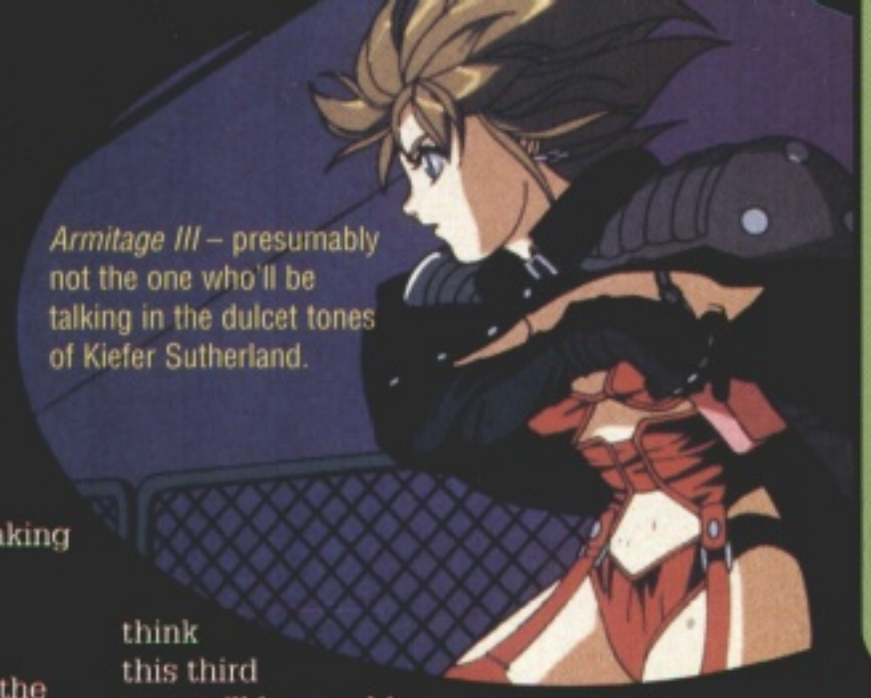
There's nothing to match the cyberwarriors in *Armitage III*.

TM: Personally I'd like to go for more international co-productions, for several reasons. First of all, there's a kind of boom in interest in Japanese animation in the United States and Europe right now, with lots of exposure, though perhaps this isn't based on much understanding of anime. Secondly, as the standard of living in other Asian countries gets higher, as a producer, I can see that I can get more money from other Asian countries too, and if I want to make a good production I need money to do it. In the past, people tried to make films for Japan's domestic market only and to keep the production costs in acceptable limits, but I think that era is already over. I want to make productions of the highest possible quality. If you want to create a very high-quality product, you have to spend much more money to create it, so if there's a possibility of getting some of that money from the international market, why not?

HM: *Ghost in the Shell* obviously used quite a lot of computer animation, as does the new Otomo film *Memories*. We're seeing more and more computer animation being used in films right around the world. Japan and the rest of Asia have a long tradition of cel animation craft skills. Do you think both those kinds of production can run side by side, the traditional art skills and the computer, or do you see the computer taking over little by little?

TM: That's a very difficult question to answer because we're trying to predict the future! But right now, I realise the importance of computer graphics, and I think there are several ways to exploit these new techniques in film. One is to use 'obvious' computer graphics as seen in *Toy Story*, where the characters' appearance is part of their charm. Another is to use them for special effects, to create backgrounds, settings or even whole scenes that you can't make in any other way. The third is as used in *Ghost in the Shell* or *Memories* – at first sight, people can't immediately tell whether they're seeing computer graphics or traditional animation. I think this third way will be used in more and more productions.

Good grief – stand like that much longer and you'll do yourself an injury, my girl.



Armitage III – presumably not the one who'll be talking in the dulcet tones of Kiefer Sutherland.

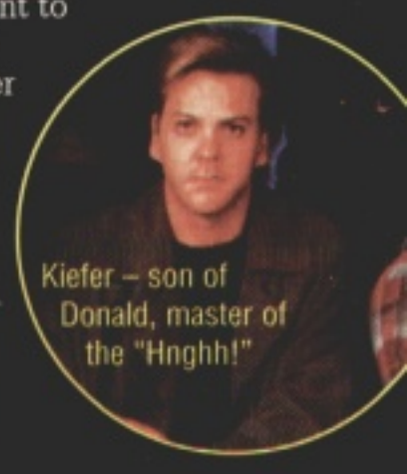
HM: Do you see computers eventually taking over some of the more repetitive tasks in traditional animation, like tracing?

TM: I think that's too far in the future to predict. At present, the hardware and staff are so expensive that if you want to use computer graphics extensively, you have to spend far more money than if you use traditional techniques! So you only use computer graphics if you need the kind of effect you absolutely can't get from cel painting.

HM: At the moment, Pioneer is producing some wonderful OAVs and the standard of 1995's OAVs in general has been very high in technical terms. It must be quite difficult to make a product to such high standards and continue to find a profitable market for it. Does he see the Japanese OAV market continuing to expand and develop, or does he think it might shrink a little in terms of the numbers of titles produced, just because there are so many titles of such a high technical standard?

TM: No, I don't think so. The Japanese anime market is well established and it constitutes about 90% of our revenue. Of course, overseas sales are important to us, but our domestic market is our main strength at present. A greater variety of high quality titles hopefully means that more people will find programmes they enjoy.

Toyah Wilcox in pensive mode, we think...

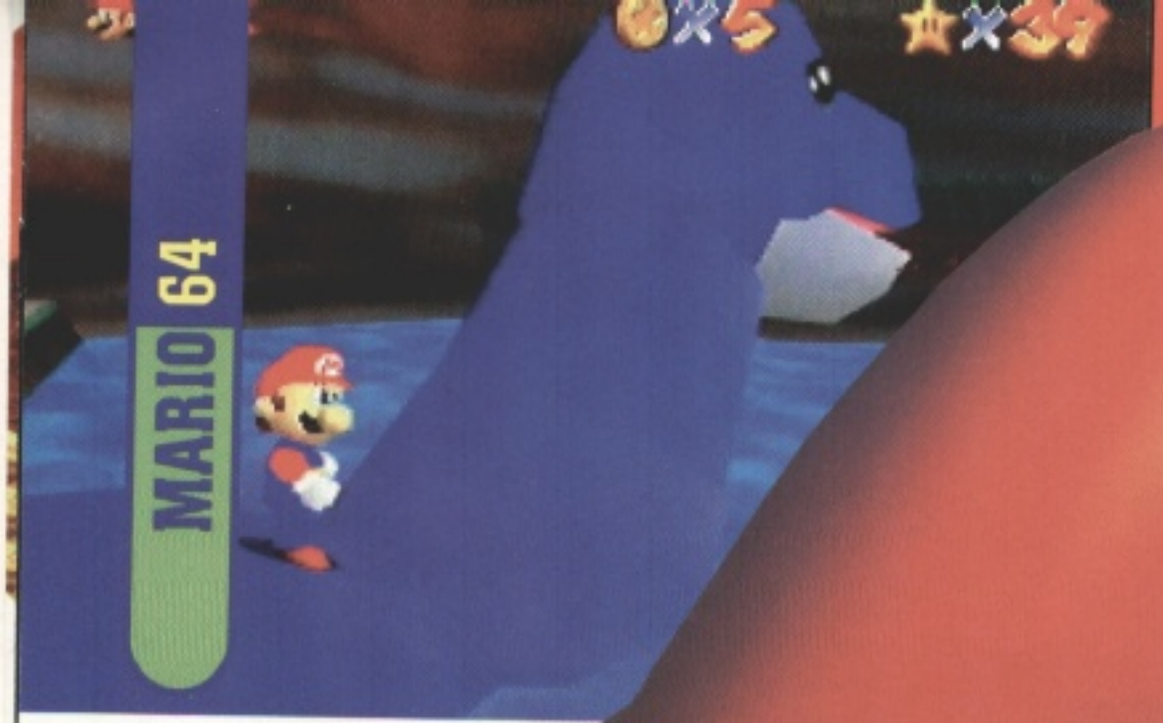


Kiefer – son of Donald, master of the "Hnghh!"

HM: Could you tell me anything about Pioneer's plans for the Western market in the near future?

TM: We'll be releasing *Armitage III* the movie in the USA and UK, with dubbing by some well-known Western actors, headed by Kiefer Sutherland and Elisabeth Berkeley. I think it's important, if Japanese animation is to succeed in the Western market, that we should use established names with proven power to attract an audience. I also have a couple of big projects in planning stages, but I can't say anything about them just at the moment.

And with that, Mr. Maki had to leave for Europe. I suppose we'll just have to keep an eye on the Pioneer release schedules to see what those new projects are!



Finding Nessy is one thing, but getting her to go where you want is quite another matter.

A desert typhoon gets you easily to the pyramid but the journey to the star calls for some pretty nifty footwork.

It's Mario, Jim, but not how we know him...

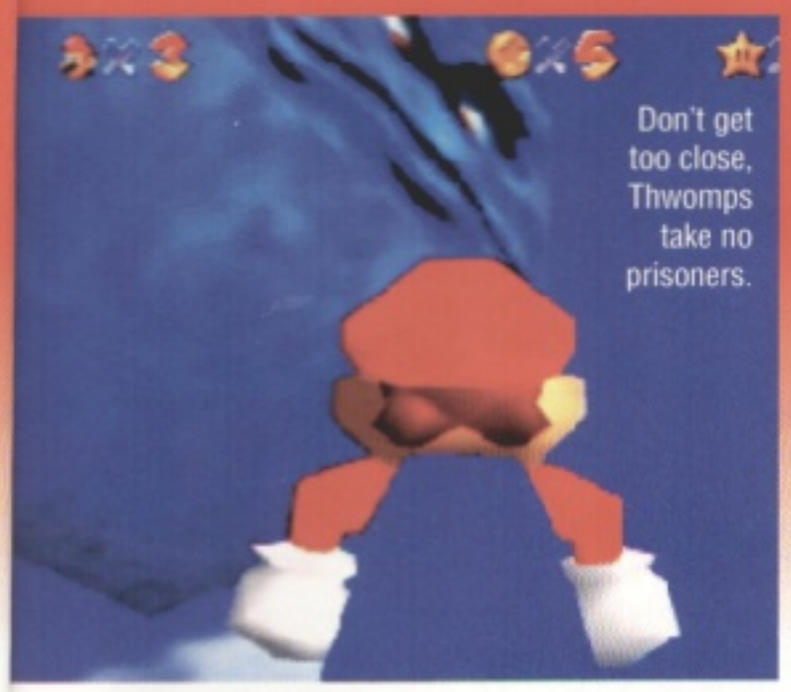
It's perhaps fitting for this, the last *Super Play*, that we should come full circle and end up where we came in – with Mario.

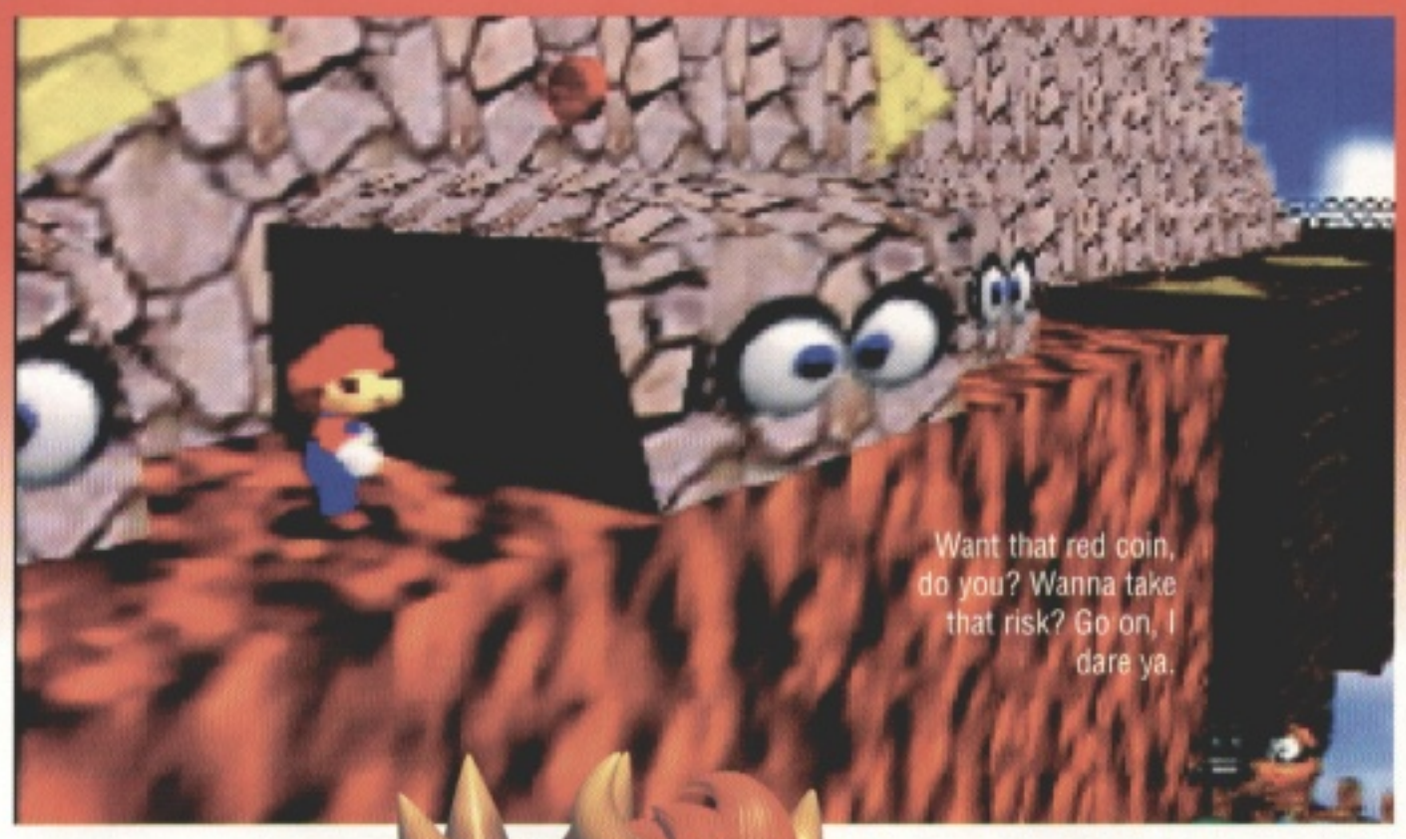
No matter what sub-title Nintendo of America may have given *Yoshi's Island* (in Japan it was never *Super Mario World 2*), this is the next true Mario game. Some five and a half years after *Super Mario Bros 4* appeared alongside the launch of the Super Famicom, and redefined the platform genre, it's left to *Super Mario 64* to perform the same task with the launch of the Nintendo 64. Fortunately for us, it does so in spades.

Super Mario 64 doesn't so much mark the end of the 2D platformer (which, as Yoshi proved, still has the potential to surprise and entertain) as create an entirely new genre of its own. The PlayStation and Saturn may have given us two and a half years of 3D gaming, but believe us, you won't have ever played anything like this before. Forget *NiGHTS*, forget *Crash Bandicoot*, forget everything. Mario constantly explores brand new territory as it takes those oh-so familiar Miyamoto gameplay elements and throws them a 3D curve like you wouldn't believe.

Swimming with stingrays proves a novel experience.

SUPER M





Starting out on a bright sunny day in front of Princess Peach's castle as we described in last month's 'first four minutes' gives you the chance to get used to your new 3D environment and gawp in wonder at the fact that there isn't a pixel to be seen. The N64's mip-mapping feature works brilliantly to smooth everything out (*Quake* eat your heart out). Here you can also try out Mario's army of moves, but the adventure in earnest begins inside where you're confronted with a plethora of doorways, some with stars on, some merely wooden and two huge double doors. It's from behind these doors that Mario warps to different areas of the kingdom in his quest to discover what has happened to the princess (as if we didn't know already).

As is the norm with Miyamoto games, things start off gently and although you can trek down to the basement (only to be confronted by another locked double door) and out into the courtyard (nothing here yet either), you're only allowed through one of the doors with a star on it. Inside is a room with a huge painting showing a procession of marching bombs and the picture wobbles unnervingly when you touch it. Take a deep breath then as you dive headlong into the rippling picture and level one of *Super Mario 64*.

Instead of the usual *Super Mario Bros* structure of merely completing each level (which the game calls 'courses') Mario must instead extract golden stars hidden within the landscape (and there are six within each level). More stars mean Mario can visit more areas of the Princess' castle and eventually open the double star doors. Some of the stars are easy to spot but difficult to get to whilst others are only given as rewards for completing certain tasks (and here's a tip that no-one in either *Edge* or *Total* realised – you'll also get one for collecting all eight of the red coins that populate each course). After you've got your star, you're warped back to the castle where you can decide either to enter that course again to try for another, or chance your

Mario's rendering might not be quite up to this standard but it comes pretty close.

Left: A plank that's just begging to be made a bridge of. A couple of hefty kicks is the key.

The first level of the castle where Mario's adventures begin. And that star on the floor's not just decoration.

MARIO 64

hand in one of the other rooms.

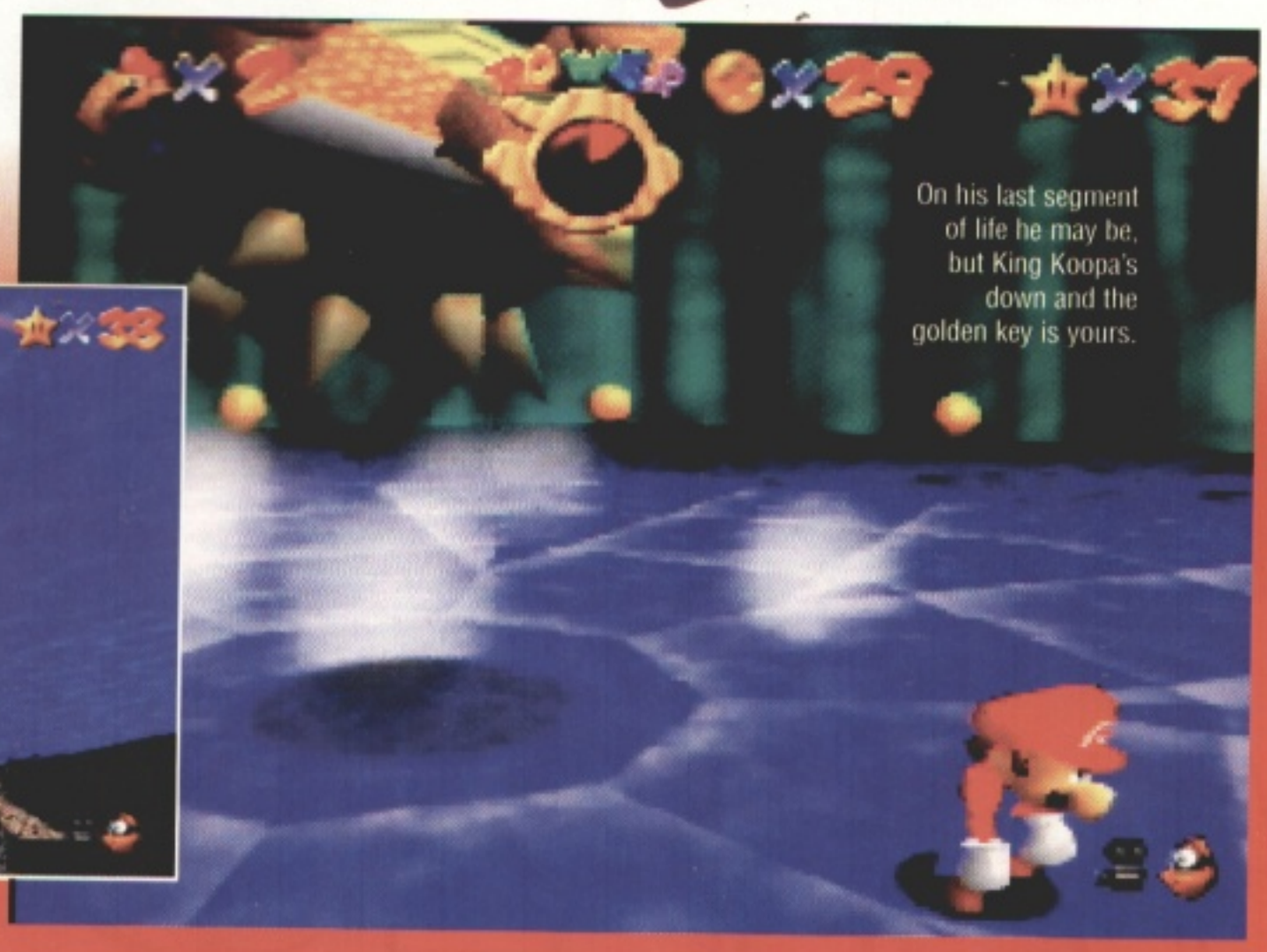
If the basic premise of *Super Mario's* gameplay is easy to describe, explaining its execution proves to be a little more difficult. Put simply, you're free to take the little plumber literally anywhere within the limits of the game world and interact totally within its environment. It's hard to find anything that Mario can't do something with. Find a tree and Mario can climb it. Find a lake and he can swim in it. Find a Koopa Trooper and Mario can pop it out of its shell and nick it for a spot of surfing on. But these are not merely throwaway touches, they are intrinsic to the completion of each level and it can sometimes take a real touch of lateral thinking to decide the best way to utilise the elements at your disposal. Probably the worst of all are the cannons that Mario can shoot himself out of. Trying to judge the distance and angle of a shot onto a platform you can't quite see anyway can prove immensely problematic (and immensely satisfying when you get it right).

Of course, with everything in 3D, you've also got the problem of tracking the moustachioed one when he disappears around a corner or other object. This is probably the hardest part of *Super Mario 64* to get used to, as the camera hovering behind him (courtesy of floating Jugem – Lakitu) is restricted by the same landscape as Mario himself. Imagine walking down a narrow corridor with Mario just in front of the camera. You can't swing around to view him from the side because there just isn't enough room for Lakitu to get between

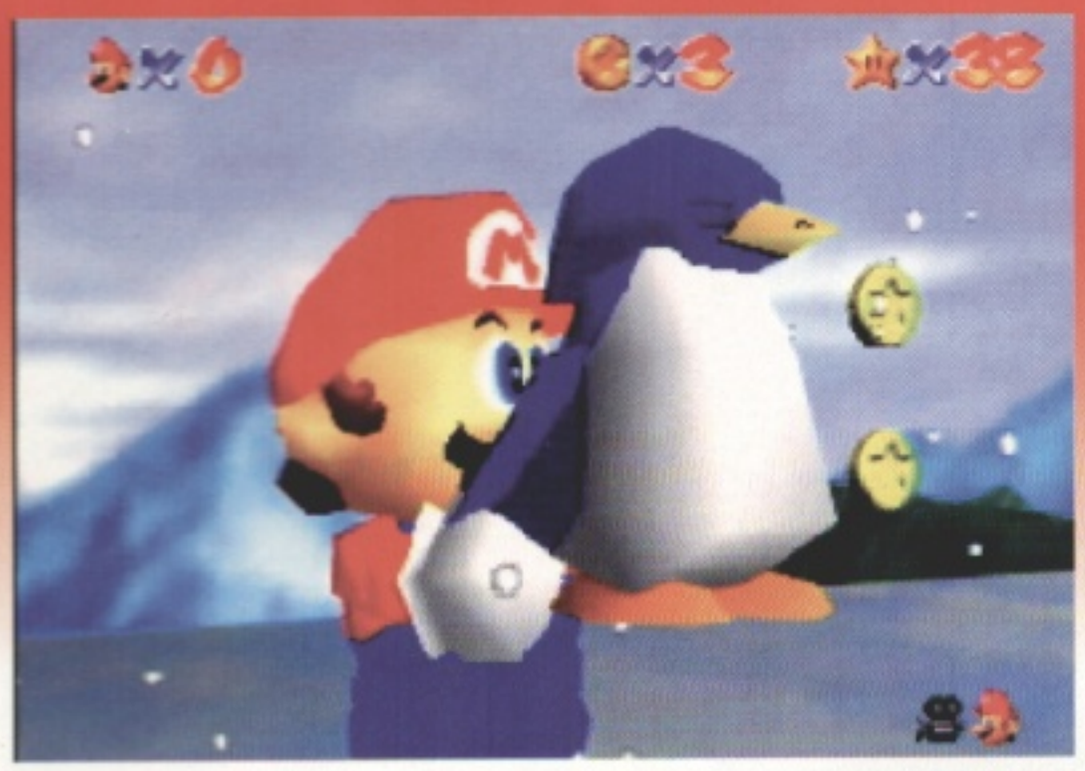
Mario and the wall. These problems and others such as trying to orientate yourself correctly underwater are only there because of *Mario 64's* amazing, go-anywhere freedom but they could cause some less dexterous players all sorts of confusion. Mario's Lakitu-cam isn't perfect but, fortunately, 99% of the time you can't help but be amazed at its intuitiveness. On the rare occasions it does go a bit wonky it's easy enough to correct, but this is the sort of learning curve you don't expect in a Mario title and it's fundamental to the game right from the start.

Originally, the absence of the usual clutch of Mario baddies seemed to indicate a lack of things to do in the new 3D world, but, in reality, things couldn't be further from the truth. The landscape itself provides more than enough gameplay and there are still enough roaming nasties to make navigation a constant hazard. When you're on a ledge right at the top of a pyramid only one Mario wide with quicksand beneath you, the last thing you want is more than one flying Shyguy hovering above your head chucking things at you. In true *Mario* fashion, everything is more than just a graphical frill. Get too close to a Bomb and he'll set his fuse off giving chase until he explodes, and the horned versions deep within the lava levels will be on the receiving end of more than a few expletives as they try to herd you off the edge of a platform and into oblivion.

To say *Super Mario 64* is the greatest videogame ever is dangerously tempting fate. Try to imagine the feeling you



A drowning Mazza is possibly one of the saddest moments ever witnessed in video games.



This little fella needs his mom (aww!), and a star is yours if you can take him to her.

More trick shenanigans as the spinny watchamacallits raise and lower the water level.

experienced when playing *Mario World*, *Zelda* or even *Super Metroid* when the desire to see more was so great you ended up playing for half the night. Yes, *Super Mario 64* generates that same kind of feeling, but whether it's actually a better game or not is hard to say. There's never been anything like this before ,so comparisons are impossible to make. Suffice to say that its single biggest problem is that you'll be playing it so much that it'll be over far too quickly, and, at the moment, there's really only *PilotWings* to be going on with.

Wil Overton

POWER UP!

In *Super Mario 64* the range of power-ups are the job of the different coloured switch blocks that have to be filled in by finding the corresponding master switch hidden somewhere in one of the courses. If you have real trouble finding all of the stars on a course, chances are a switch block will be the key.

You'll be wanting to run around the back then, if you don't want to feel the firey breath of Koopa on your little italian behind.

RED SWITCH

This gives Mario a winged cap and the chance to fly. Rather like the cape in *Super Mario World*, you glide rather than fly, so, rather than taking to the skies by jumping off the ground, a good way of getting really high is to fire yourself out of a cannon whilst wearing the cap.

GREEN SWITCH

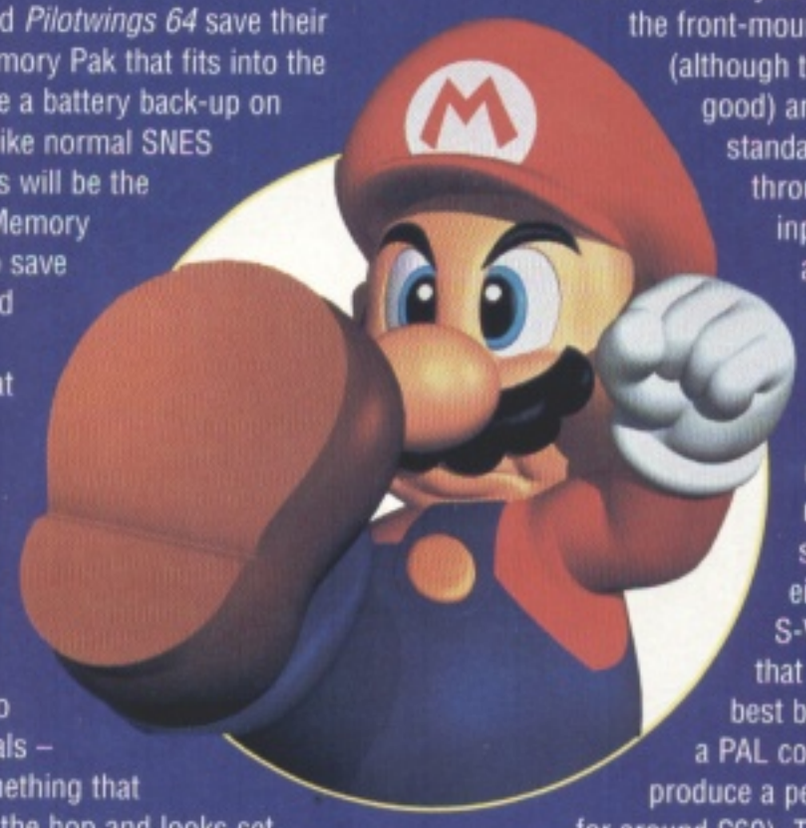
This turns Mario into a T-1000 like liquid metal version (hence it being known around the office as Terminator Mario). Not only are you invincible for a time but you sink like a stone when underwater (more handy than you might think).

BLUE SWITCH

Another type of invincibility, this also gives Mario the ability to pass through some apparently solid objects like the pictures in the Ghost House.

NINTENDO CLINIC REVISITED

The arrival of the Nintendo 64 in the office brought with it a few surprises that contradict some of answers in last month's *Hyper Play* Nintendo Clinic. The first is that neither *Mario 64* and *Pilotwings 64* save their positions to the Memory Pak that fits into the controller. Both have a battery back-up on the actual cart just like normal SNES games. Whether this will be the norm and that the Memory Paks will be used to save only pad set-ups and other data is not quite clear yet, but at the moment only Seta's *Shogi* game makes use of the little add-on.



The biggest shock though is that the machine only outputs S-Video and composite signals – no RGB. This is something that caught everyone on the hop and looks set to cause the grey import market more than its fair share of headaches. *Super Play* tried the machine on various TVs and only the most modern of Sony models really coped well. If you've got a dedicated S-Video input (a small round multi-pin socket) and your TV accepts a 60hz signal then things should be fine (although you then need to source the correct lead – remember that the only socket on the back of the N64 is a Nintendo multi-out). You might also find that you get something through the front-mounted composite phonos (although the picture won't be as good) and also by using a standard SNES RGB lead through an S-Video Scart input (we found this gave a colour picture but with interference) but this is by no means guaranteed to work on all TVs, especially older models. Other than that, until some enterprising soul comes up with either a box that converts S-Video to RGB or a lead that does the same job the best bet for early adoptors is a PAL conversion box (Datel produce a perfectly good little unit for around £60). This will give you a full screen picture of a respectable quality.

Have Nintendo done this purely to nobble the import market? It's hard to say, but if you are intending to get a Japanese machine, make sure with your importer that you'll actually be able to run the thing.

Don't panic, Mr Mannering! This is merely a tester race to get you used to sliding along your bottom. Which you'll be doing a lot.

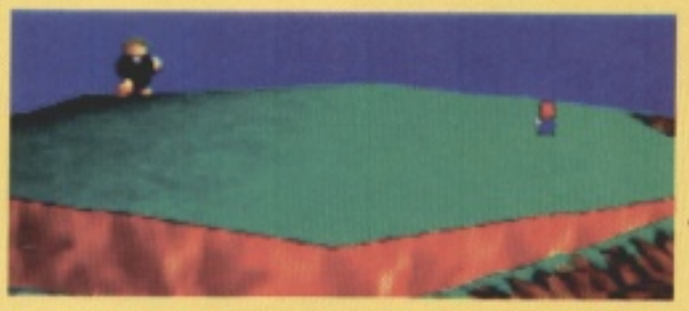
It's slippy slidey ice world time and a hazardous time awaits Marios who want all the red coins.

BOMBS AWAY

Let's visit Mario's first port of call to show just how that Miyamoto magic works in *Super Mario 64* – welcome to the World of Bombs.

☆ STAR ONE ☆

On your first trip you've got a choice of two stars to try for, but we'll leave the rather intimidating Chomp till later and head straight to the main pyrotechnical man himself – The Bomb King. He lives right at the top of the hill that dominates the landscape. At first glance, things look rather intimidating as the only way up seems to be by negotiating a winding track populated by giant rolling balls eager to squish any hapless plumber in dungarees who tries to out manoeuvre them. Help is at hand, though, as, about a third of the way up, a small recess acts as a teleport taking the user to just below the summit. Remember this point, it'll become handy later on. At the top is the bomb king who is a tad reluctant to give up his star. Don't let him get too near as he'll pick little Mario up and try to throw him off the plateau. Run around the back and grab him instead. Don't throw him off the edge, though, a couple of smacks on the tush will soon see him give up the spinning golden prize. Easy? Maybe, but it gets you into *Mario 64*'s style of gameplay and running around the back of things and grabbing them may come in handy later (come on, you know it will).



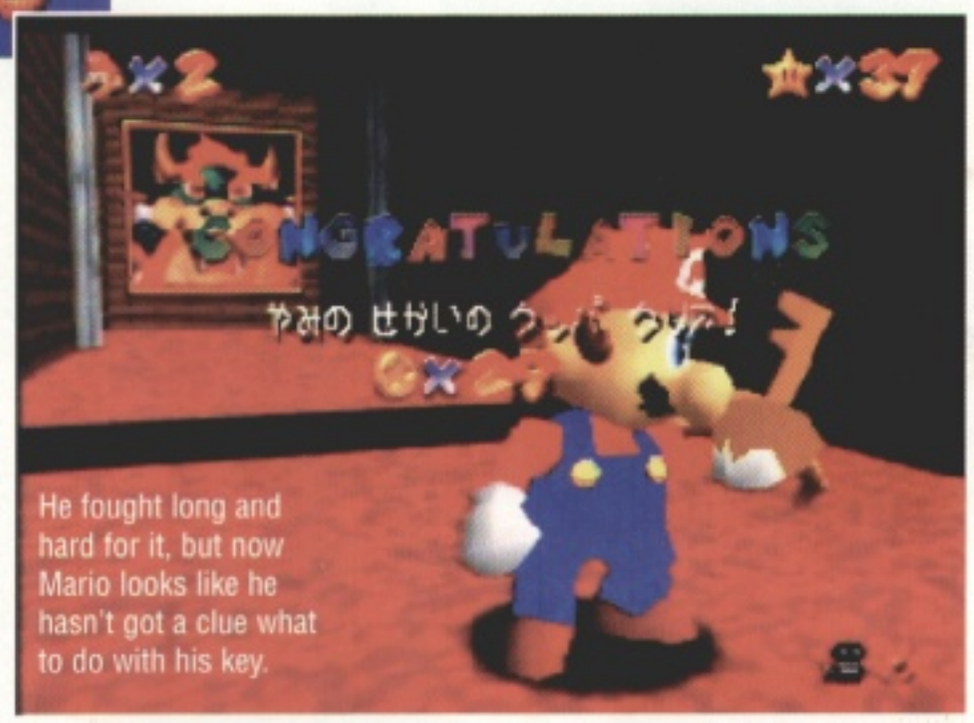
☆ STAR TWO ☆

On returning to the bomb world you'll notice a slight change. There now seems to be an infeasibly large Koopa Trooper hanging around near where you warp in. A chat to him results in a challenge to race to the top of the tower. Accept and you'll soon find that the cheeky blighter doesn't intend to play very fair as he pelts as fast as his little legs will carry him up a slope that Mario finds just too slippery. But ah-ha! Mario can cheat too – by using the teleport you found earlier the race. The star is easily yours. By now you should be used to quickly navigating the landscape without making many silly falling-off-platforms type mistakes.

Mario and Koopa have a swinging time (this has been an official Lame Caption ™).

It's a long way down, Mario, and, thanks to the power of the N64, you can see right to the bottom.

Mother and baby reunited. Awww!



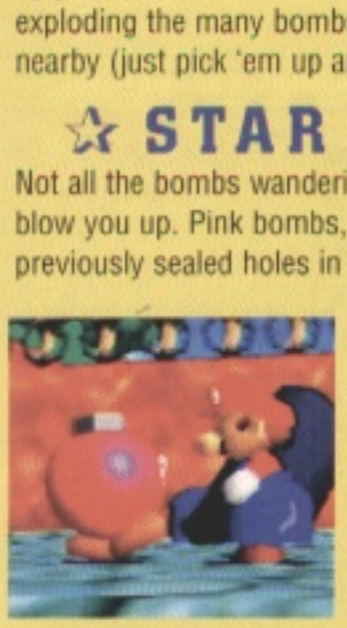
He fought long and hard for it, but now Mario looks like he hasn't got a clue what to do with his key.

☆ STAR THREE ☆

Time to tackle that Chomp and maybe get the star that's trapped behind the railings he's chained in front of. This is a test of one of Mario's top attacks which we shall daintily refer to as the 'butt slam'. A jump in the air and a quick tap on the controller's 'z' trigger brings Mario down hard on his little blue behind. Do your best to avoid the chomp's ferocious teeth and get to the little post he's chained to and climb up on it. Butt-slam it three times and the chomp will be released. Off he'll go, breaking down the railings and allowing you to get to the star. Chances are you'll take some damage during your attempts to free the chomp but in between slams you can top up your power meter with coins gained by exploding the many bombs wandering around nearby (just pick 'em up and chuck 'em).

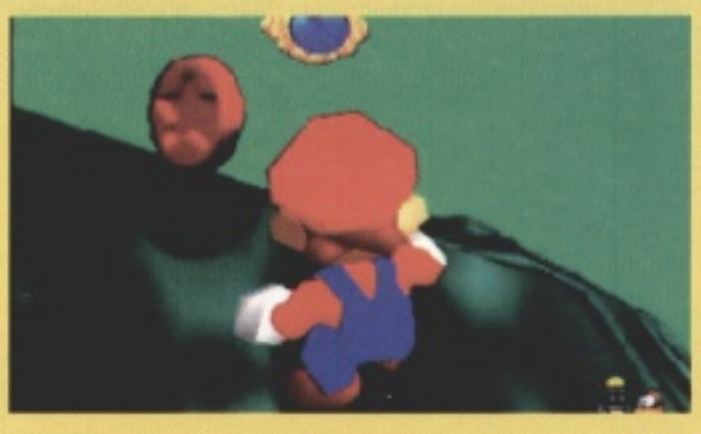
☆ STAR FOUR ☆

Not all the bombs wandering around are out to blow you up. Pink bombs, when talked to, uncover previously sealed holes in the ground. Drop into one and you'll emerge inside a large blue cannon with your viewpoint changing to the cannon's aiming sight. A tap of a button will send little Mario hurtling in the direction you aimed. Just right for getting to that floating island high in the sky (although we're not going to tell you just which cannon to use – heh-heh). The latest star is just waiting for you in the question mark block on that island.



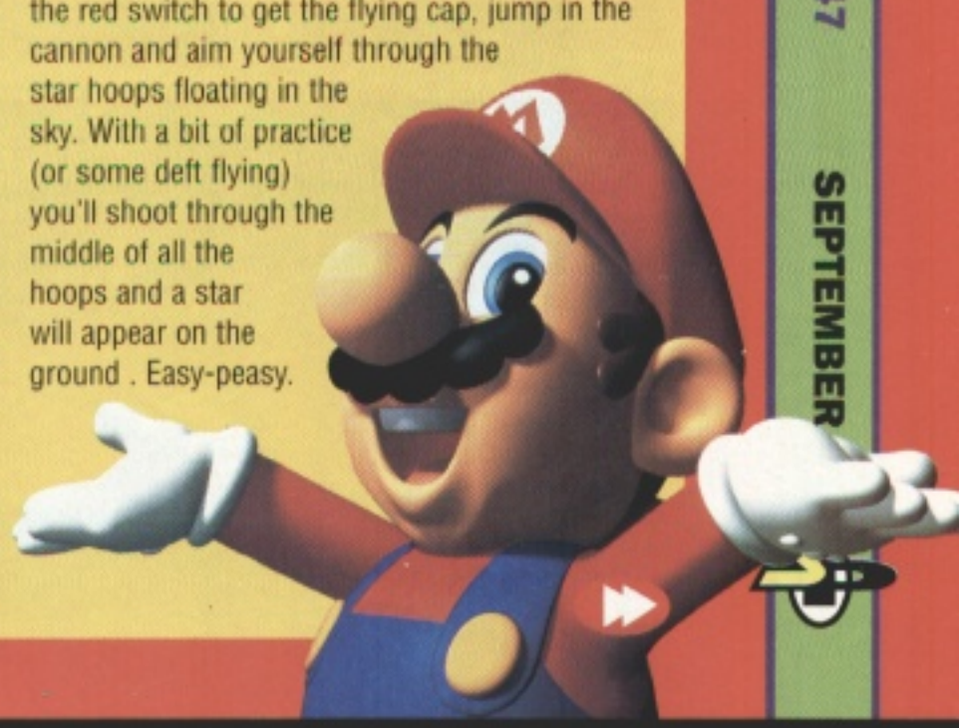
☆ STAR FIVE ☆

The fifth star is yours for the taking by merely collecting all eight of the red coins that litter the landscape. We're not telling you exactly where they all are – but hey! this is the first course – it's not that difficult.



☆ STAR SIX ☆

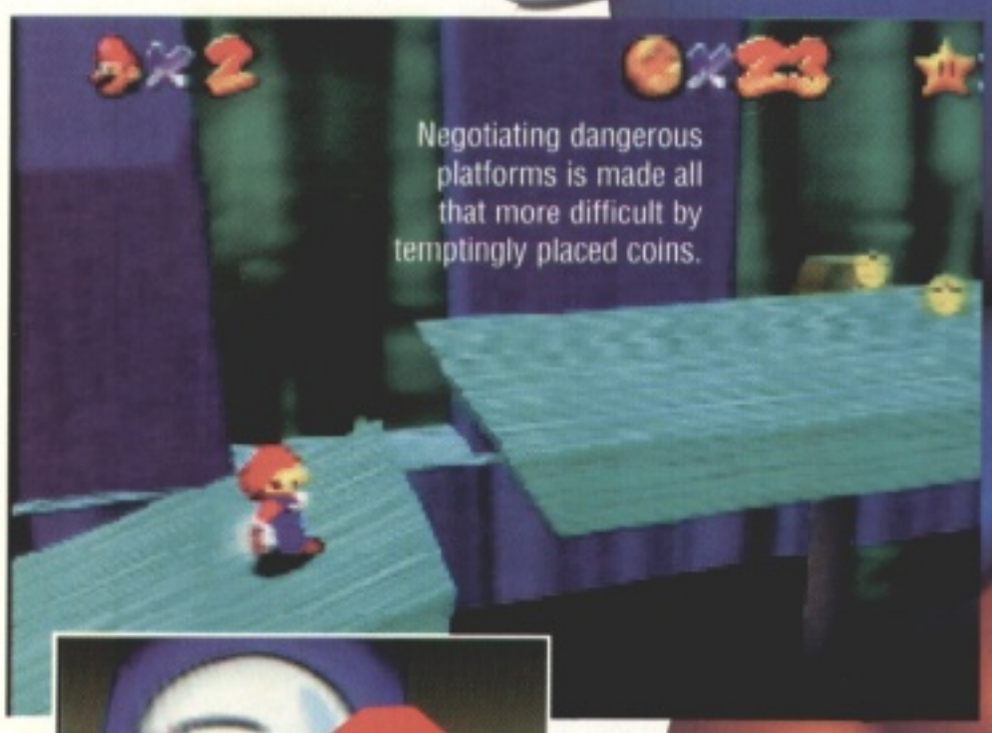
One of *Super Mario*'s great strengths has always been the way later parts of the game open up sections which, in earlier levels, were inaccessible and *Super Mario 64* is no exception. There are three different coloured switch blocks in the game (see Power Up!) and the red one is crucial to getting all six stars in the bomb world. From the floating island (where you got star four) hit the red switch to get the flying cap, jump in the cannon and aim yourself through the star hoops floating in the sky. With a bit of practice (or some deft flying) you'll shoot through the middle of all the hoops and a star will appear on the ground . Easy-peasy.



The objects of all your attentions in *Super Mario 64* – the stars.

Hide inside the metal cubes – you know it's right.

Quicksand – not good for Mazza.



Negotiating dangerous platforms is made all that more difficult by temptingly placed coins.

What spooky secrets does the shy Boo hold?

The sliding Koopa puzzle was considered, in the office, jaw dropping.

SUPER MARIO 64

Nintendo

THE VERDICT M'LUD?

Originally this was meant to be a preview of *Super Mario 64* with the review coming next month, but as we all know by now this is the last issue of *Super Play* so – what the hell – this is what we would have given it...

GRAPHICS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
98%	92%	97%
GAMELIFE	OVERALL SCORE:	97%
90%		

VERDICT: Amazing, fantastic, drop-dead wonderful. All this and more applies to *Super Mario 64*. Miyamoto and his team have delivered just what they promised – an interactive cartoon. And, if ever there was a killer app to sell a new machine *Mario 64* is it. Play it as soon as you can, and make little sighing noises quietly to yourself.

PILOTWINGS 64

The number two to Mario 64 offers a completely different challenge. Super Play picked up the gauntlet... but forgot their sick bag.

You'll believe a small ginger boy can fly!

Relax. You're quite safe here. The hidden bird man level offers a dream-like flight through the skies.

Have you ever had a dream where you're flying. Soaring above rooftops, waving at passers by, swooping downwards and pulling up at the last minute? Play *Pilot Wings* and you'll start having those dreams more often – and you'll also realise just why it is that you awaken after these dreams of flight feeling so refreshed, so cheery and yet so disappointed that it was just a dream. Being able to flap your arms and fly away would be the finest thing... and it would be like *Pilot Wings 64*.

Pilot Wings on the Super Nintendo was something of an acquired taste. It demanded patience. Calling for terrifyingly precise control manipulation it offered the chance to fly through courses of hoops and little more. It was a flat, quiet challenge which, though wonderfully executed never set the games world alight. Pilot Wings 64 showcases the graphics capability of the N64, the flexibility of the controller and the inventiveness of Paradigm Software. It is, in short, a wonderful game. Regular players are offered three air sports – hang-gliding, jet pack and gyro copter. But play well and spot those secrets and you can unlock the hidden bonuses on the cart – the bird man, sky-diving and the human cannonball. Join us in a tour of the bona fide sports on offer, and check out *Gamesmaster* next month for the secret levels. Turn these pages and take to the skies.

The Hang Glider

Anybody fancy a spot of kite flying?

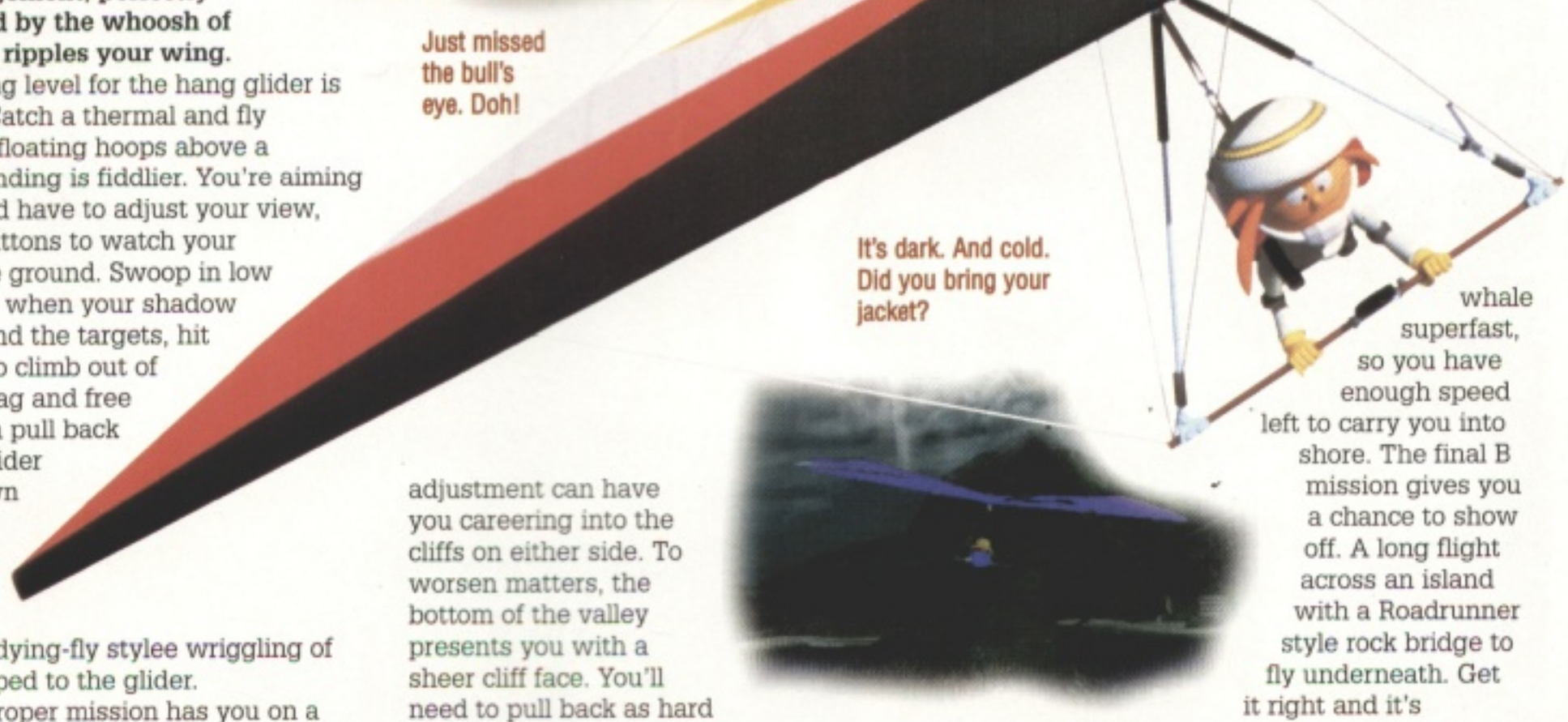
Strapping yourself to a vast kite and running off cliffs presents an original challenge for games players. While hang gliders are fast and highly manoeuvrable, the conspicuous absence of any form of engine means that most of the time you'll be struggling just to stay in the sky. You can always trade off speed to gain height, but try to climb too quickly and you'll trigger an alarm and stall, dropping out of the sky like a stone. That's where thermals come in – warm air currents which rise and will take you with them, should you enter their flow. Presented as swirling mist with an upward whirl, these circular areas appear on the radar as round blobs, and if there's one on a level then it's generally for a good reason. The top right shoulder switch on the controller flicks between a chase perspective and close-in view of the glider. The latter is weird because of the way the pilot shifts in the harness to steer. Push right on the joystick to go right, and, spookily, your legs will go left. It's odd at first but you'll get the knack. For backing music on the hang glider section, the developers have chosen a mellow arrangement, perfectly complemented by the whoosh of the wind as it ripples your wing.

The training level for the hang glider is dead simple. Catch a thermal and fly through three floating hoops above a fairground. Landing is fiddlier. You're aiming for a target and have to adjust your view, using the C buttons to watch your shadow on the ground. Swoop in low and slow, and, when your shadow gets just beyond the targets, hit the A button to climb out of the sleeping bag and free your legs, then pull back to stall your glider and touch down rear end first. Fail and it's a nasty tumble and spin, followed by a dying-fly stylee wriggling of legs still strapped to the glider.

The first proper mission has you on a one-way trip down over icy mountains, towards a dock where you have to photograph a flame coming up from an industrial complex. You need to get the flame dead centre, as after the mission you'll be graded on your images taken from a contact sheet. Only catch is, though, if you lock the flame in on centre and then don't pull back quickly enough, you'll get toasted! It's not fatal, but your pilot will let out a scream, a cloud of smoke and be blackened for the rest of the mission – needless to say it'll affect your score!

The second mission in the A category is a Pepsi Max concrete balls affair. You take a running jump off a wooden platform and point almost straight downwards. You're in a tight river gully with a course of hoops going all the way to the bottom. The water roars in your ears, and, at the speed you're falling, the smallest adjustment can have you careering into the cliffs on either side. To worsen matters, the bottom of the valley presents you with a sheer cliff face. You'll need to pull back as hard as you can and give it a full lock to the left. Take a right and – if you make it round – you're unlikely to reach the landing pad. After that the coast to the landing pad is positively serene.

Just missed the bull's eye. Doh!



Grip the bar, run, and close your eyes!

It's dark. And cold. Did you bring your jacket?

Get enough points and you'll graduate to the B missions. The first in the set shows off one of the trickier facets of thermals. They can start many miles above sea or land level. You've got to catch three different rides upwards, each acting like an escalator to the next. Miss one and you'll never make it to the landing pad. Reach the touch-down spot and it's even fiddlier. You have to get your speed just right or you hit the mountain, go into a spin... and it's a long way down. The second mission has another photographic theme. Except this time you're photographing a cartoony smiling whale – with a spout of water on his back. The trick here, as you'll have to go low and out to sea away from any thermals, is to approach the whale superfast, so you have enough speed left to carry you into shore. The final B mission gives you a chance to show off. A long flight across an island with a Roadrunner style rock bridge to fly underneath. Get it right and it's applause, applause and a swift drop down to the seaside landing spot. There are four more events in the C category... but you'll have to play the cart through to see them!

Photograph the flame but don't get too close.

Look down at your shadow to line up on landings.

You can replay the action from external cameras.

We've struck oil!

Use the thermals to gain height.

Push down and go for it over the mountain stream.

t the cliff walls and you'll mble to your doom!

Go through the flame and char your outfit.

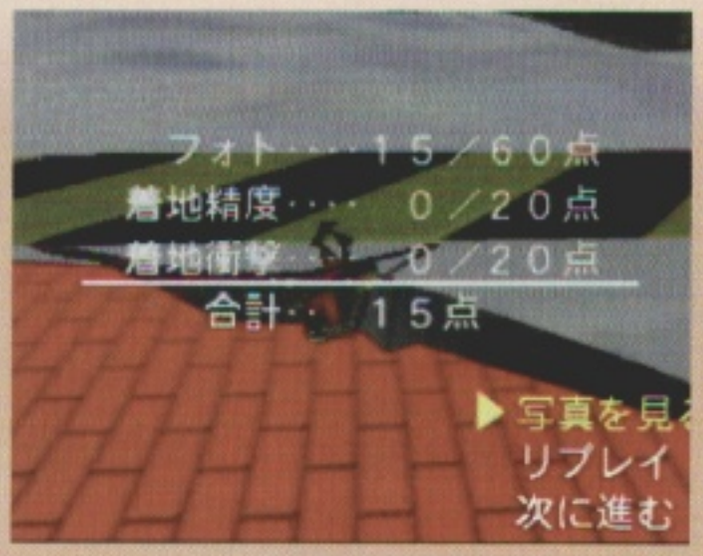
Are you ready for your close up?

Fiendishly addictive, this part.

Getting all the hoops down the waterfall is almost impossible.

Pull back. Pull right. Just do anything!

The sun's gone in over the beach.



Rubbish! Time to do the funky dying fly wriggle.

A running jump off a cliff edge. Dive! Dive!

These oil refineries are destroying the environment.

The Rocket Belt

An old favourite from the original game, this ridiculous mode of transport gets a funk-adelic dressing up and a funky sound track!

Jet packs are a stupid way to get around. Lacking any kind of aerodynamic qualities, the human body when weighed down by fuel and engines just gets heavier – and harder to lift.

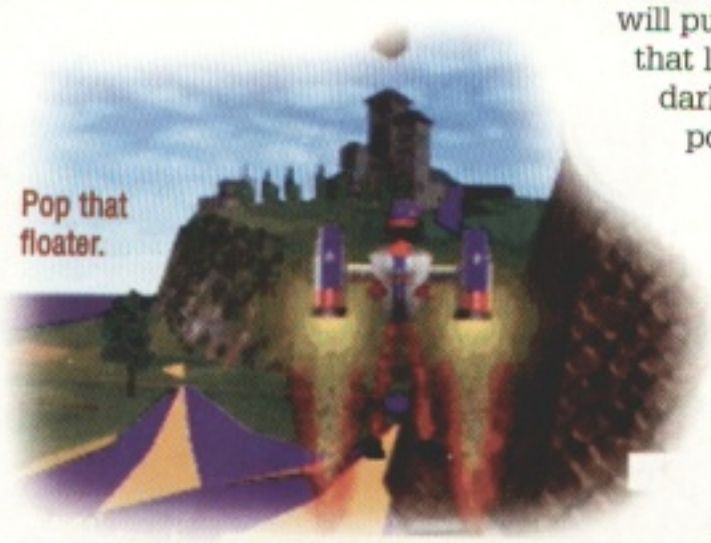
The intro level should help you get to grips with the controls. The analogue joystick controls the angle and direction of your thrusters, they can swing through a semi-circle and... for obvious reasons... never blast upwards. Squeeze the Z trigger and your engines will spin, with a bluey white glow. This'll bring you to a deadstop whatever your speed. Only problem is, this really gobbles the fuel – and gas is the only way your jet pack buddy can get around.

Ready for jetpack funk?

Training has you flying over the fairground towards a castle tower at the top of which is a floating sphere. Let rip Superman stylee and pop it with your head. Mission accomplished. You might want to filly around with the hang gliders circling the tower, but basically all you'll discover is how much faster and manoeuvrable they are, compared to you.

Also, we couldn't resist going out to sea and trying to land on one of the boats. No such luck. While they don't inflict any damage (two points off your score if you hit a building) they will bounce you off, usually to a watery grave. Coming into land on the bull's eye target, you'll need to switch to the top view (activated with the right shoulder button). While the green B button gives you a powerful burn, the weaker yellow A button is the one to go for if you want minute movements in your final approach.

The first proper level offers a taste of urban America. The Hollywood sign on the hills is a dead giveaway, you're in Los Angeles. The sun's just going down and the entire level, with its skyscrapers and bridges is alive with the sound of traffic. You can't see the cars – but hey, you know they're there. The challenge is a hoop course, with spinning rings (which sometimes spin on off-centre axes), vertical and horizontal columns of rings, and even ones hidden away down side streets and at the top of skyscrapers. Get through that and you're faced with floating landing pads, with bull's eyes on, which disappear when you land on them, causing other targets to materialise elsewhere. The trick here is to use the time you're standing on the platform to look around and spot your next destination.

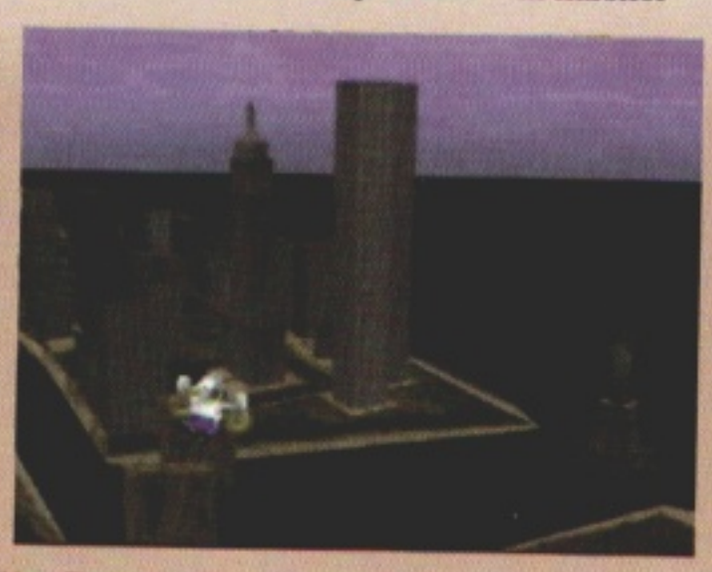

Pop that floater.

The next set of challenges kicks off with another massive beach ball to burst, only this time it pops into five smaller bouncing baby spheres. Being smaller, these call for more accuracy and move more quickly too. Wipe out those and you'll spot on your radar another daddy ball – but now you've got to take it out while avoiding the cranes, gas tanks and buildings of an onshore refinery. Onwards and upwards, the next level has you taking on yet another harsh hoop course – in harsher weather than you'll have yet encountered in *Pilot Wings*. The driving blizzard and howling wind will push you into rocks that loom up out of the darkness. The penalty points will be lost thick and fast on the cliffs in this one.

Even the rides move.

The final level before professional is bizarre to say the least. A bigger than ever beach ball floats just out to sea. Jetting into it you find that it won't pop, but can however be bounced around the sea. A quick scan around the beach reveals a vast circular area, surrounded by lights. The colour's the same as the beach ball, so you figure that's where the beach ball belongs. And you'd be right. Why are you doing this? Haven't a clue. Because it's there? Anyway, after trying to drive it across land, you'll quickly realise that the trick is to take it out to sea then bounce it back. The long, but quick route. Thrown into the mix for good measure are two extra little elements. You bounce back off the ball when you move it, meaning that, as you're only a few feet above the water anyway, you could quickly find yourself splashing down and wasting all your good work. Also, the ball bounces up and down as well as along. It's a right three-dimensional nightmare!

Heading to the top of the tower on the LA level.


Yes. That's the Statue of Liberty down there.

This pesky hoop spins on its base.

Playing through the snow and the driving winds.

Ah, that's better. barely a cloud in the sky.

These peculiar constructions are, in fact, observatories.

Floating, moving target trauma.

Hooray for Hollywood!

Player selection screen – so who's it to be?

The bouncing baby balls. Pop 'em all!

Three hoops in a row as you approach your target.

Check out the over pass – a road on stilts.

Hoops can be anywhere. The radar is little help.

Hoops close to the ground are more dangerous.

The Gyrocopter

Straight out of the James Bond movie *You Only Live Twice* this little baby is zippy, manoeuvrable and tooled up with explosive-tipped missiles to boot. *Gwaaan!*

You generally start the gyrocopter levels on the runway. You'll need to get your revs up before pulling back the nose and taking to the sky. When airborne the first thing that will strike you about the copter is the quality and detail of the model. The rotors spin, sure, but, more impressively, the rudders and ailerons shift too in response to your direct control inputs. Disappointingly – and this probably has more to do with gyrocopters' aerodynamic failings than lazy programming – you can't loop the loop or pull barrel rolls. Or at least we couldn't... maybe there's some trick to it.

What you can do however is blow stuff up. Press the trigger and your cross hair pops up on screen, just below the copter. Centre up your victim, release the trigger, and your missile zips off. Simple and intuitive. The missiles are mostly intended for target practice, blowing bull's eye dartboards into a thousand fragments. Shooting at almost anything else just causes a cloud of shrapnel but no real collateral damage... so all this target practice has to be getting your eye in for something doesn't it... read on!

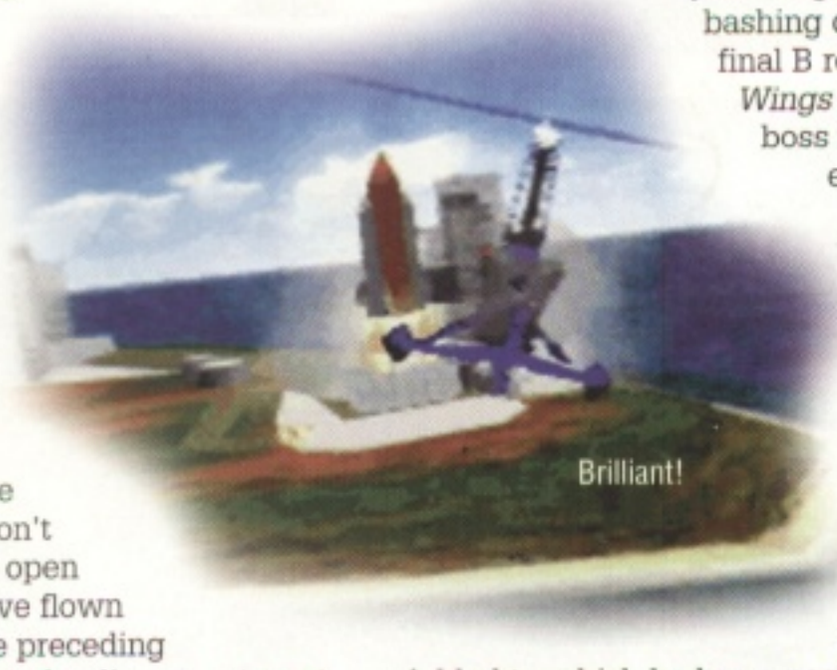
The victory fly by. Congratulations!

Yes. That is a space shuttle.

The training mission is... again... simple enough. Taxi off to the dancey, action-sounding music and you'll notice something different about the hoop course. Because you're expected to negotiate these routes in a specific order, the loops won't actually open until you've flown through the preceding one. Rather than landing on a target, you're now expected to negotiate a runway – meaning you'll have to get much more sorted than before and actually have decent approaches.

The first set of proper missions starts with a hoop course around a deserted island. The second is based on the same island, but instead has targets to blow up. Squeezing off a glowing missile and watching the smoke trail thud home is a good, good feeling. It's on the second challenge level (B) that the gyrocopter action really starts to heat up. For starters, you've got a brilliant hoop course to fly through with seats-of-the-pants action, zipping under five bridges in a row. Get through this tough route and you're treated to a flyby over a Space Shuttle launch. Believe us, this is no cheap thrill!

After the Space Shuttle action you've got a tortuous set of targets around a windy island, shrouded in darkness. Dead atmospheric and moody. Some of the bull's eyes are hidden away in the most obscure nooks and crannies – you'll find yourself straining your neck, wishing you could just align the crosshair! The reward for your diligent target bashing comes in the final B round – the *Pilot Wings* equivalent of a boss level. An enormous giant stomps around the countryside. He's a good hundred foot, so you'd think he's a sitting target, except he's pretty nippy for a big guy.


Brilliant!

Added to which he has a nasty habit of picking up rocks and throwing them at you. They'll knock you out of the air in an instant. He takes four hits to kill, but each missile will put him on his back. Keep putting him down, though, and he just gets madder!

The Pro levels in the gyrocopter offer a manic hoops course in the middle of a

The gyrocopter. Long, cool and pointy.

Taxiing for takeoff. This is how it begins.

Pink gyro copters are not cool. They are in fact pink.

Let rip with the missile and blow up the target.

A white hoop close up. Time to climb a little.

Makes us feel quite summery here in England.

blizzard, where you need to watch the direction the snow is blown to figure out what the wind's doing, and, make no mistake, your Sinclair C5 with wings is a much lighter aircraft than the biplane featured in SNES *Pilot Wings*. The second pro level is a time trial. Dozens of football like spheres float in the sky and you've got to blow them to bits – 20 of them against the clock. You'll need to make sure that every target run has at least three successful good kills. The final Pro level sees the giant return except this time he's swimming through the sea. Fire a missile and the tinker will dive for cover, resurfacing moments later. The only way to score hits is to come in fast and low and fire at the last minute. The gyro copter rules!

You need a careful approach here.

Pull off the throttle as you dive.

We tried but failed to die horribly in the space shuttle exhaust.

Do you go for the easy blue hoop or fly under the bridge and catch a white one?

Even the little boats move around the harbour.

Looking right as you approach take off.

Dropping down to a tight left turn.

Flying under the bridge is essentially for show offs.

CONTROL FREAK

According to Nintendo bigwig Howard Lincoln the N64 controller is its secret weapon. Super Play tells you why...

The joypad that Nintendo designed for the Super NES took the gaming world by storm. While Sega gave Mega Drive gamers something that looked like a crass spaceship, with clunky buttons and special grooves for palm sweat, the Nintendo equivalent fitted perfectly into mitts of all ages and gave the word 'ergonomic', which is a fancy term meaning working well with the human body, a whole new meaning. Now, with the N64 controller, the back room boffins in Japan have taken the concept of a control a step further. Or should we say a tiptoe, a stroll, a running leap, punch and butt slam forward.

It's no surprise that the N64 controller was built to showcase one particular game above all... *Mario 64*. The problems of moving a moustached plumber around with responsive and precise controls, which at the same time need to reposition cameras in a real 3D world, presented special problems to Nintendo designers. Added to that,

Six flavours – that's strawberry, lemon, blueberry... er... grey, purple and green.

though, is a desire to make the classical joypad work better with driving games, simulations and even beat-'em ups. So join us on a tour of Nintendo's latest and greatest controller ever made...

You just can't ignore that shape, can you? Three (count 'em) prongs. Separate handlebars, resembling some spooky, pointed, demonic gardening implement. Don't be afraid though. They have a nice organic feel and just like the curved edges on the SNES controller you'll instantly find them comfortable. The left and right prongs are intended to form-fit the player's hands, though the larger, centre one has a grip shaped somewhat like a flightstick. That's two regular, one ribbed, eh lads!

The trick is that there are three different ways to hold the controller, with positions you'll change according to the type of game you're playing. Check out the picture over the page for the details. Knowing that you don't always just have to hold it by the left

and right prongs is essential for getting started with the controller and thankfully those nice people at Nintendo are avoiding ever making games where you'll have to change grip mid-level.

Moving back into territory any respectable Nintendo player will be comfortable with, you'll find a cross pad on the left of the controller. This standard eight directional pad is typical of most controllers... most unrevolutionary. It's not much use for games that take place in 3D environments, as the inputs it provides are too limited. It's been left in for classical RPGs, puzzlers, sports games and arcade games like beat-'em ups. We'll come onto the joystick in a mo, but, suffice to say, for the quick turn arcaders you'll still need this basic control pad for directional movement.

On the buttons front, there are some welcome additions as well as classical touches. The triggers positioned on the top shoulders of the SNES joypad have been kept. But where in SNES *Pilot Wings*, they gave a sharper turn, the top left button is now unused, while the right shoulder switch is used to change views. And then there's the Z trigger. That's the name given to the new button hidden beneath the controller, on the central prong. The Z trigger, can do whatever a game designer decides, from firing a weapon to performing a special power. For example, in *Mario 64*, it does the funky butt slam, while in *Pilot Wings 64* on the gyro-copter level it fires your missiles – this instinctively feels right, as it's like a machine gun switch on a flight combat sim stick.

The right-hand side of the controller features four yellow buttons in a similar diamond pattern to the SNES joypad. These are called the C buttons, ostensibly because they're used to change camera angles while playing a game. Of course this is only in the 3D games. They'll also be useful in arcade games, like for example the SNES classic *Smash TV* where the four buttons were used as a directional controller for firepower. With this in mind, the yellow keys are helpfully embossed with direction arrows... just in case there's any confusion.

The A and B buttons, the blue and green ones respectively are positioned to the immediate left. This has a couple of key advantages. Firstly, it simplifies arcade games – how many times have you only had to use two of the buttons leaving the others in the diamond as duplicates just to confuse you? So where before you just used Y and B, now you'll get A and B. Cool huh! A much more useful reason for the six button cluster is beat-'em-ups. The now-standard *Street Fighter II* layout, two rows of three buttons was unworkable on the old SNES pad meaning that a generation grew up relying on the shoulder pads for those hard attacks. Now the controller can better emulate the arcade and (gah!) even the Sega joypad experience!

Staying with the buttons for only a moment longer, you'll notice that the red button in the middle is the Start. This marks the first time Nintendo's controllers will lack a select button throughout all of their home console designs. Shock horror. But never mind... Everything you need can still be accessed as the Start switch will pause the action and call up menu systems a-go-go.

And at last, we're onto the most radical feature of all. The analog joystick. Positioned just underneath the start button above the centre handlebar, there's a tiny raised up plastic joystick which you control with your thumb. Time for a quick science lesson... (Skip this next paragraph if you're easily confused!)

Electricity is a complicated thing, but for the sake of simplicity let's assume there are two ways that information can be sent from your controller. Binary or analogue. Binary sends your console an on or off signal. That's a 0 or a 1 maths-heads. It's a button that's pressed in or left out. What analogue does instead is send a range of numbers to your PC. Rather than a switch, it's a position along an electrical coil. It can be lots of values. The technology harks back to those old paddles you used to get with knobs on for those cheesy old Binatone tennis games in the early eighties. So, as you can guess, this technology isn't exactly new. But give it a 3D lease of life and plug it into a super console like the N64 and the result is, let's say, electric.

The upshot of all this is much more precise and subtle controls.

Howard sez...

Transcript from Nintendo Ultra 64 Conference

"... Let me emphasize the capabilities of this new controller. All by itself, I think it will help revolutionize the video-game industry because it gives the entire development community the opportunity to do things that simply have not been possible before and it creates the potential for entirely new types of games..."
Howard Lincoln, chairman of Nintendo of America.

What about virtual reality then?

There was a lot of talk at the genesis of the Nintendo 64 that it would be a virtual reality machine. Maybe, maybe too much talk. Nintendo are still hedging their bets and claiming that the 360 degree potential offered by the controller and the console's graphics capability is a form of VR anyway.

Whether they'll launch a head-mounted display, using technology prototyped for the Virtual Boy is still anyone's guess. Howard Lincoln is on the record as saying "We don't have any plans for a head-mounted display. The power of the processor will allow us to do something like that but we're going to concentrate our efforts on getting the installed base up and we've got to do that by selling the hardware with traditional video games like *Super Mario 64*. I think at this point we regard the head-mounted display as a niche market, if at all." Yeah, right. Like, do you believe him when he says the N64 will make it to the UK for this Christmas?

Let's take the example of a driving game. A directional pad will give you a quick turn to the left, but what if you wanted to turn an onscreen steering wheel gradually or go to a full lock, perhaps accelerate quickly or dab the brakes? No problem with the joystick controller, as it enables you to make tight movements in minute degrees. That's why Mario can tiptoe, walk or run all with the same controller. PC gamers have had analogue joysticks and mice for ages and many swear that the fluid controller offers faster turning, for example a flick of the wrist in *Doom* and you're facing the other way, rather than waiting for a gradual rotation.

Beyond just the pointy, switchy bits there are a few other things you ought to know about the N64 controller. First of all, the system contains four controller inputs as opposed to the traditional two – which immediately gives you four-player capability. Wonderful news and blissfully free of tacky plug in four-play adaptors.

To make things easier the controllers are available as accessories in yellow, green, blue, red, grey and black. This enables you to further personalise game play since the console box is aware of which colour controller you're playing with. So, if you're playing *Wayne Gretsky Hockey* and you plug in a red controller, the circle beneath your player will be... you guessed it... red! Oh, and there's the memory card slot just above the Z trigger. Save games, controller configurations and who knows what else.

Nintendo has reinvented the standard controller, just as they did with the SNES joypad. Sony claimed a controller revolution when it redid the SNES pad with a chunkier feel, smoother curves and a couple of extra two shoulder buttons. But Nintendo has stormed the Winter Palace and declared a people's republic with the finest controller ever made.

And why has *Super Play* chosen to lavish so much praise on the controller in this, our final issue? Simply because a good controller should be invisible to the player. It should be a natural thing – you're not meant to spot it and think "What an amazing controller!" You'll pick it up, love it and never notice it again. Because it just works and it's just right. Which is just as it should be.

OUTASIGHT

In a 3D world, like in Mario 64, your character can be lost behind objects. By switching the camera perspective horizontally, vertically, or by zooming in or out, all using the C buttons or shoulder pads, you can regain visual contact.

Keep an eye on Mario with the C buttons.

The socket!
Plug in your removable memory packs here and take your save games with you.

The Z button
The trigger gives the controller a flight stick like feel.

The L & R buttons
Who says shoulder pads are going out of fashion?

Hold me!

The N64 controller is shaped with three separate handlebar grips, allowing three different hand positions...

Right Position
Holding the centre and right grips, this hold makes the most of the 3D stick. It's the one you'll use for *Mario 64* and racing games

Left Position
Using the centre and left grips. Allows control of the 3D stick and Z Trigger Button with the right hand and the control pad with the left. As used in *Blast Corps*.

Super NES Position
Holding the two outside grips, this traditional position allows total digital control of side scrolling action games, puzzle games and classical RPGs.

THE CONTROLLER IN FULL

And up the cable...
Four gorgeous controller sockets.

Memory Pack
(Underside.) Can be loaded into the controller to save a player's position and controller customisations. Take your settings anywhere!

Start button
Start and pause button, but boo hoo no select!

C Button Unit
Offers several different game play functions including switching camera perspective, character positioning, attacks and plenty of other actions. Buttons can also be used to position character, for example fielders in a baseball game

Controller: Nintendo 64
Hands: Alison's own

Cross pad
An eight directional joypad... just like on your SNES.

3D Control Stick
Allows for unprecedented, 360 degree game movement. Subtlety enables characters to creep, walk, trot or sprint .In racing games, acceleration and turning are life-like.

Three handlebars
A demonic fork, offering three different special Kung Fu grips.

A and B buttons
These blue and green chappies simplify controls in simple games and allow you to play arcade beat-'em ups in the way the programmers always wanted you too.

Nintendo's revolutionary new controller combines both digital and analogue control mechanisms, alongside a cluster of action buttons.

It's the favourite style of game of the world's greatest videogame designer, Nintendo's Shigeru Miyamoto, and it's also the most popular with the people that count – gamers. This month's special examines where they've been, where they are, and where they're going.

What do you mean you don't

know anything about...

PLATFORM GAMES?

There are more platform games on the SNES than there are any other type of game. Forget fighting games, shoot-'em-ups and RPGs – just take a look at the amount of games in the listing across these pages and see how swamped the market is with the blighters. Sure, most of them are about as appealing as an old pair of brown-and-orange Y-fronts, but the very best are the best videogames of any description. But where did it all begin?

The ball started rolling with any degree of momentum in 1980, when a budding videogame designer sat down at a drawing board at Nintendo's Japanese headquarters with a view of thinking up a game he himself would like to play. Settling on one of his favourite movies, *King Kong*, as his inspiration, the young Shigeru Miyamoto sketched out plans for what was to become one of the arcade industry's biggest-grossing coin-ops, *Donkey Kong*.

The limitations of 8-bit coin-op technology at the time meant that its graphics could only be basic, and, ironically, this primitiveness led to spawning the identity of the world's most recognisable game character, Mario. Legend has it that his red-overalls-and-blue-shirt combination came about only because it was the easiest way to demonstrate movement in his arms when he ran, and that he was only given his oh-so-distinctive red hat because Miyamoto and his cronies weren't happy with their efforts at giving him a hairdo. It was only after the event that a Nintendo employee looked at Mazza and decided that he looked like a plumber. Inauspicious beginnings, certainly, but a star was born – the most famous plumber in the world. The game itself offered only four levels of static-screen action, but its run-and-jump framework set a trend that would last forever.

Manic Miner (right) and *Jet Set Willy* (far right) set a new standard in platformers when they appeared in the early '80s.

THE UK STRIKES BACK

In 1982, struck by the hookability of games such as *Donkey Kong*, a lone UK programmer set out to borrow some of its ideas for a game he was crafting for Sinclair's ZX Spectrum home computer. Mathew Smith completed the seminal *Manic Miner* the same year and released it to unparalleled critical acclaim. Its impeccable presentation (at a time when most Speccy games were shoddily delivered affairs) and 20 screens of humour-packed, tripped-out, finely tuned gameplay – two of which being in

Q: Which Nintendo platform game star do more American children find recognisable than Walt Disney's iconic hero, Mickey Mouse?

fact blatant homages to *Donkey Kong* – set gamers' imaginations alight.

A sequel was an inevitability, and it appeared in 1983 as *Jet Set Willy*, the first platformer to offer the player a vast landscape to explore – albeit a screen at a time – in the form of a mansion peppered with items that Willy had to retrieve following a wild party. It was another massive hit, yet, much to the chagrin of Spectrum fans everywhere, Smith never got around to producing a third game in the series, despite it being promised time and again. In fact, he was never to write another game of any description, and his whereabouts today remain one of videogaming's mysteries.

LUIGI STEPS IN

In Japan, Nintendo had by this time decided to test Mario's earning potential by putting him in a game of his own, with no oversized ape for company. *Mario Bros* was released in 1983, the other brother referred to in the title being, of course, Luigi, an identical sprite to Mario except for being green where the original was red.

The game did something much more significant than simply introducing Luigi to the videogaming world, though – it marked the first appearance of being able to jump on enemies' heads to incapacitate them, a concept used and abused in thousands of games since. The enemies in question were turtles – later to be christened Koopa Troopers.

While not nearly as big a hit as *Donkey Kong*, *Mario Bros* was a worthwhile earner for Nintendo, and it proved to be a perfect launchpad for a pair of characters who would go on to rule the videogaming world.

MARIO GOES SUPER

Mario Bros' sequel, released in 1985, was another revolutionary game, and a landmark in the development of the platformer as we

Mario was born in 1980. Not a bad 'tache for a 16-year-old.

A: Mario, of course. In a US survey conducted a few years ago, the moustachioed Italian plumber beat the rodent hands-down.

KNOW THY ENEMY

The life of the platform game fan is one peppered with dangers and obstacles, each waiting to catch the unsuspecting player unawares and drive him into a pit of despair with its nobness. There are loads around, but these are *Super Play*'s three least favourite:

Bubsy the bobcat is a typically inept attempt at creating a Mario-beating platform game character. Duh...

Contrived characters

Ever since Nintendo and Sega created Mario and Sonic as mascots that could stand as iconic representations of themselves and give them immediate accessibility to game kids across the globe, every man and his dog has had a stab at their own – generally with dismal results. The list of non-characters is seemingly endless, but some of the more notable failures include *Zool*, *James Pond*, *Bubsy*, *Chuck Rock*, *Chester Cheetah*, *Aero* and *Mr. Tuff*.

THE GAME LISTING

What's that you say? You want to know about the platformers that've appeared on the SNES? What, *all* of them? Oh, all right then, let's give you the rundown, in more or less the order that they've appeared in Super Play over the years...

Out Of This World • Interplay • SP1 • 81%
This French-produced platformer is most notable for its presentation – the hero, Lester, and his many and varied adversaries are generated with polygons. It's not the biggest game the SNES has seen, and its controls are a bit unwelcoming at first, but it's original and fun.

Dinosaurs • Irem • SP1 • 83%
Stealing umpteen ideas from the rather brilliant *Super Mario World*, *Dinosaurs* is a splendid little game, if a tad on the easy side. One of the few platformers offering simultaneous two-player gaming, it's cleverly designed and addictive. Watch out for that Irem bugbear, grinding slowdown, though.

Hook • Sony Imagesoft • SP1 • 72%
A sumptuosly crafted movie conversion, this, with colourful backgrounds and natty little sprites. It's not all plain sailing, though – the action is a trifle pedestrian and it adheres to the Big Platform Game Rulebook rather too keenly (check out the slippy-slidey ice level).

Xandra's Big Adventure • Namcot • SP1 • 88%
One of the most challenging Super NES platformers around (the Gamefreak is the only *Super Play* member to have finished it) is also one of the most original. Its jolly locations and appealing characters make it a rather memorable title, while its gameplay proves inviting to this day.

Dragon's Lair • Elite • SP1 • 82%
Hugely overrated when it made an appearance in issue one, *Dragon's Lair* is a coin-op conversion in its loosest sense (i.e. it's completely different from the original). A preposterous uninviting difficulty level and acutely annoying password section ruin it.

Super Castlevania IV • Konami • SP1 • 91%
A development from the popular NES series featuring Simon Belmont and his *Dracula*-defeating exlpoits, this is one of Konami's crowning glories, with slick graphics, tight gameplay and one ot the most atmospheric soundtracks ever in videoaming history.

Joe And Mac: Caveman Ninja • Elite • SP1 • 72%
Based on the fairly popular coin-op of the same name, Joe And Mac is beginning to look its age nowadays. Its jumbo graphics don't help gameplay (and its collision detection is a bit dodgy), but there's a workable two-player mode on offer and a wodge of pretty graphics.

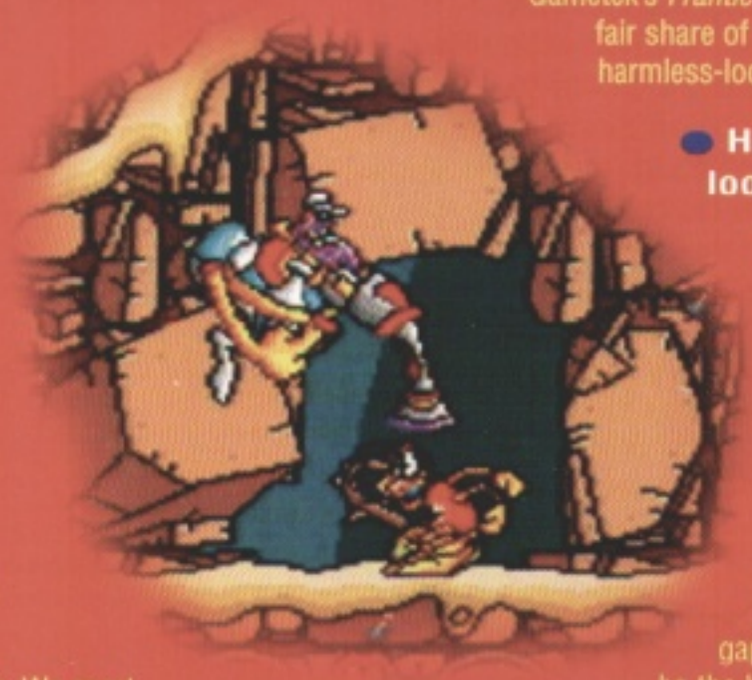
Krusty's Super Fun House • Acclaim • SP1 • 79%
One of *The Simpsons*' most enduringly larf-inducing characters makes it to the SNES in the form of a platform puzzler which takes *Lemmings* as its inspiration. Except, being Krusty the Clown, your task is to round up and kill rats rather than save any cute little things.

The Addams Family • Ocean • SP1 • 82%
Heaven knows how some programmers arrive at

PLATFORM GAMES?

Q: Which SNES platform game features backdrops made up of scenery generated by the machine's Mode 7 capabilities?

know it today. Entitled *Super Mario Bros*, its playability over eight worlds, with four levels per world, represents an almost perfect difficulty curve as players first get to grips with the game's inertia, are challenged through its middle sections, then tested to the very limit in its closing stages. The inclusion of power-ups was a masterstroke – it



Gametek's *Frantic Flea* has more than its fair share of both leaps of faith and harmless-looking-yet-deadly holes.

● Leaps of faith
Let's face it, if the crux of a platform game is that you must jump from one place to another, you at least need to know where that other place is. Some games are so stupid that they miss out on this fundamental point, asking you to throw caution to the wind and just leap for a target somewhere off-screen – sometimes to your doom. We must not stand for this type of sloppy, careless design.

● Harmless-looking-yet-deadly holes
We're talking about those bits where you've been travelling around an area and the game half invites you to further explore the environment by jumping down a gap... which turns out to be the bottom of the playing area, and plummeting you to your doom. Now what is that all about, eh?

difficulty settings for their games (do they toss a coin?), 'cause some are just so dumb-assly tricky that you want to break them with a big hammer. This is a case in point, which only saves itself by being quite complusive.

Home Alone • T•HQ • SP1 20%
A thoroughly dire attempt to cash in on the success of the movie. Hopeless graphics and sound do nothing to rescue the tragically banal gameplay from the claws of drudgery and tedium. A waste of money for fans of the movie – and just about anyone else, for that matter.

Jerry Boy • Sony Imagesoft • SP1 60%
An odd-looking game that, like *Xandra's Big Adventure*, proves an intriguing slice of Japanese weirdness. As a shape-changing blob of, well, blobby stuff, you come across all manner of chuckle-worthy foe, to the accompaniment of some often very tuneful muzak.

Metal Jacket • Atlus • SP1 • 20%
There was a time when games such as this – pump platformers dressed up with tech-heavy graphics – were two-a-penny on the SNES, but fortunately that's all changed now. Imagine the Sega title E-SWAT delivered with none of its gameplay and you'll get the idea.

Musya • Datam • SP1 • 30%
Your hopes are built at start up by its carefully shaded graphics (which give it the look of a *Ninja Spirits* clone), but its stilted animation, mincing hero, and inept gameplay soon arrive to kick you in the teeth and leave you reminded that looks count for little, ultimately.

Prince Of Persia • NCS • SP1 • 80%
A quality conversion of the computer classic with new, much-improved graphics, an atmospheric intro and a fabulous *Lawrence Of Arabia*-style soundtrack. Not an easy game by any means, but the password system allows progression without too much trouble.

Spanky's Quest • Natsume • SP1 • 50%
Don't be misled (or, erk, excited, depending on your leanings) by the title – this is but a routine platformer featuring a monkey who uses bubbles to kill baddies, while collecting keys. The similarity of its levels certainly doesn't lift it out of the crate marked 'Dull'.

Super Ghouls 'n' Ghosts • Capcom • SP2 • 85%
Fundamentally an enhanced version of the mega-successful coin-op. *Super G 'n' G* is typical of Capcom's early SNES work, with glorious graphics and hooky tunes. It's rather spoilt by its sheer toughness and lack of restart points throughout its expansive levels, though.

Super Ghouls 'n' Ghosts: one tough cookie.

Super Valis • Telenet • SP1 • 50%
Admit it, you've never heard of Telenet, have you? Well, you needn't worry – this conversion of a PC Engine CD-ROM game featuring the adventures of a troupe of Japanese girly characters offers no excitement whatsoever. It's contrived, boring and linear.

Super Contra Spirits • Konami • SP2 • 90%
A development of the coin-op Gryzor, *Contra* is platform blasting in the classic mould, with huge explosions, huger bosses and carnage galore. Each platform-based level is interspersed with a Mode 7 overhead affair, but they're not gimmicky at all. A legend in SNES gaming.

Actraiser • Enix • SP2 • 90%
Looking back at it now, *Actraiser*'s platform portion (the other portion is an easy-access God sim thing) looks rather weak, with not really enough action to warrant such a score. But the way the whole thing comes together (and the knockout music) ensures it our approval.

Super Adventure Island • HudsonSoft • SP2 • 75%
By choosing to rip off Sega's classic *Wonderboy* coin-op, Hudsonsoft gave themselves an immediate advantage with this, a scrolly jumpy shooty thing. It ends up being too easy, though, its colour-drenched graphics and superb Yuzo *Actraiser* Koshiro soundtrack proving saving graces.

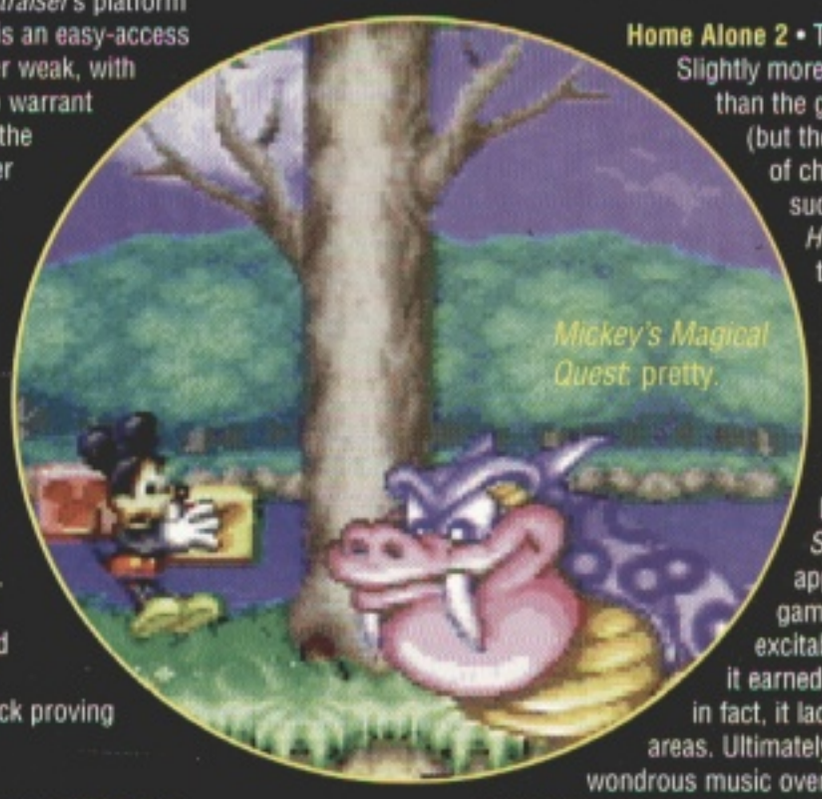
Super Mario World • Nintendo • SP2 • 94%
What more is there to say about the SNES's first ever game? Not a great deal, obviously. So let's just reiterate its strengths: its gameplay is tricky yet easy at the same time, it's big, it's compulsive, and it marks the first appearance of everyone's fave dino-a-like, Yoshi.

Mickey's Magical Quest • Capcom • SP3 • 89%
If you took *Super Play*'s review scores literally, you'd notice that we adjudged this game's graphics to be only 5% short of perfection. And, apart from being a little bit on the easy side, the game's pretty impressive too, with some tasty special outfits to explore.

Spiderman & The X-Men In Arcade's Revenge • Acclaim • SP3 • 72%
Given the rich opportunity afforded developers by the world and history of Marvel's characters, you'd expect games about them to be great almost by default. Not so. This one's uneven gameplay, for example, spoils it. (But listen to that Tim Follin psuedo axe work...)

James Bond Junior • T•HQ • SP3 • 29%
Another game of two halves (er, Des), this offers both platform and shoot-'em-up action as the Juniorster traverses several emptyish levels in search of badly drawn enemies. In common with most games based on kids' cartoon series, it's pump of the first order.

Pushover • Ocean • SP3 • 78%
More a puzzle-based levels-'n'-ladders game than a straight platformer, *Pushover* sees ex-Quavers 'star' G.I.Ant attempting to clear screens of dominoes. While fun in the short term, the nature of its gameplay means that it doesn't stand up to repeated play.



Mickey's Magical Quest: pretty.

Home Alone 2 • T•HQ • SP3 • 32%
Slightly more imaginatively realised than the game of the first film (but then we suspect a group of chimps could have made such an achievement), *Home Alone 2* does little to help T•HQ's desperately poor reputation. Crude graphics certainly don't help its cause.

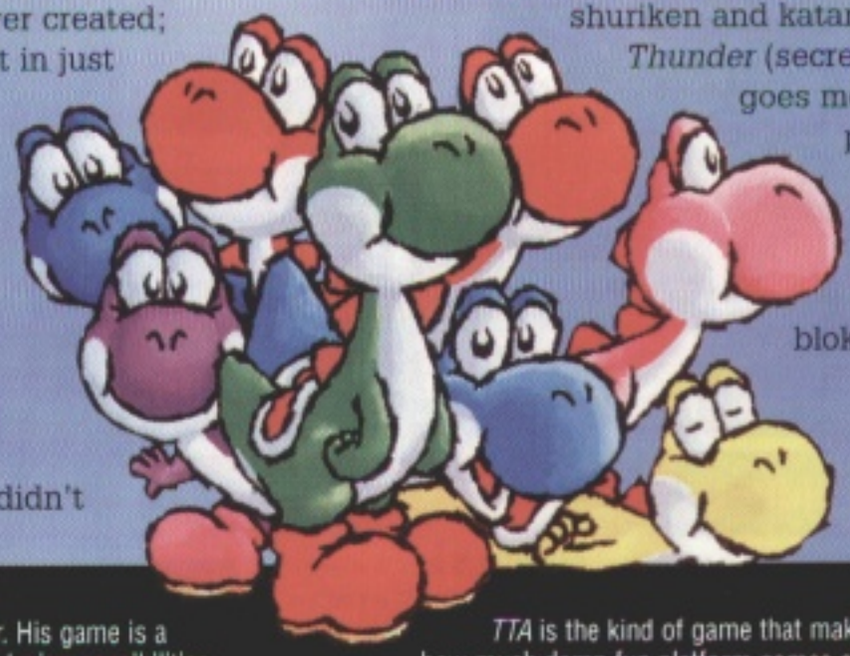
Super Star Wars • LucasArts • SP4 • 89%
Super Star Wars appeared at a time when game reviewers were easily excitable. The upshot was that it earned glowing praise when, in fact, it lacked polish in several areas. Ultimately its neat graphics and wondrous music overshadowed its haphazard difficulty setting.

Chuck Rock • Core Design • SP4 • 61%
A conversion of an Amiga hit that proves, perhaps, that platform game stars don't have to be cute to exist: Chuck is a repulsive caveman with a beer

gave Mario an extra chance if he hit an obstacle, and changed the face of the game when you were forced to play in shrunken-down form. Also worthy of note are the underwater sections, whose watery feel is remarkable, and gives a welcome respite from the main bits. *Super Mario Bros* represents Nintendo at their best, and stands as one of the most influential games ever created; you can see bits of it in just about every successful platformer since.

TIME FOR ACTION

The platform game didn't really develop technically in leaps and bounds between '85 and the end of that decade, and the focus in coin-op examples shifted from wide-eyed and cutesy to furrowed-of-brow and bloodthirsty, with blades and firepower coming to the fore, led by titles such as *Rygar* (Aztec-like bloke goes crazy with lethal yo-yo weapon), *Shinobi* (ninja bloke goes mad with shuriken and katana), *Rolling Thunder* (secret agent bloke goes mental with pistol and machine gun) and *Rastan Saga* (Conan-type bloke goes



Have you ever seen anything cuter?

THE FUTURE OF PLATFORM GAMES?

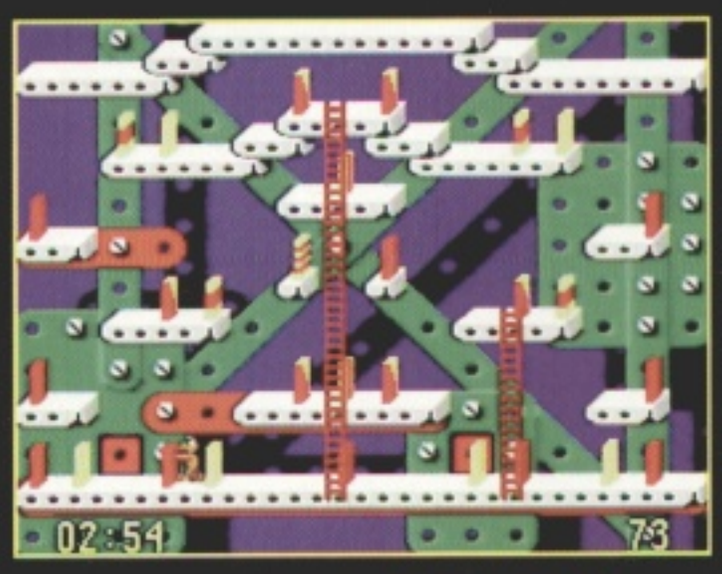
The foundations for the future of the platform game genre are already being laid by Nintendo's astonishing *Super Mario 64*. You'll have read about it in detail elsewhere, so we won't waste any space talking about it here. Instead, let's sketch out just a few of the areas we want attention paid to as platform games pull out of the mid-'90s on their way to the next millenium.

Variety

Though standard jumpy-jumpy platforming can be gut to rival any darts player. His game is a lacklustre affair, with weak design sensibilities typical of many UK platformers.

TTA is the kind of game that makes you realise just how much damn fun platform games can (and should) be. Diversity is the keyword here, with myriad gameplay twists. Sadly, it's all over rather too quickly.

Gunforce • Irem • SP4 • 59%
This one- or two-player platform shoot-'em-up could have worked well... had Irem passed the honours to more competent coders than their in-house boys. Despite some coin-op-faithful visuals, the result is totally hampered by extreme s-l-o-w-d-o-w-n.



Pushover: quite platformy, very puzzly.

Death Valley Rally • Sunsoft • SP4 • 42%
The prospect of a game based on the misadventures of Wile E. Coyote is mouth-watering – unfortunately Sunsoft opted to put the player in the shoes of the eminently punchable Roadrunner. A horribly floaty feel is the final nail in the game's coffin.

Skuljagger • American Softworks Corp • SP4 • 58%
As a platform-strutting pirate, your role is quite an exciting one. However, its dull execution, poor collision detection and nonsensical gameplay traits (you use bubblegum as a weapon, for goodness sake) spoil what potential it had.

Assault Suits Valken • NCS Masiya • SP5 • 90%
The emphasis in this mecha-saturated release is on destruction, on an endearingly grand scale. There's not much platform-jumping accuracy required; instead you spend most of your time racking up kill after kill and admiring the fab scenery. A top game indeed.

Tiny Toon Adventures • Konami • SP5 • 89%
Blessed with the a bulging sack full of imaginative touches,

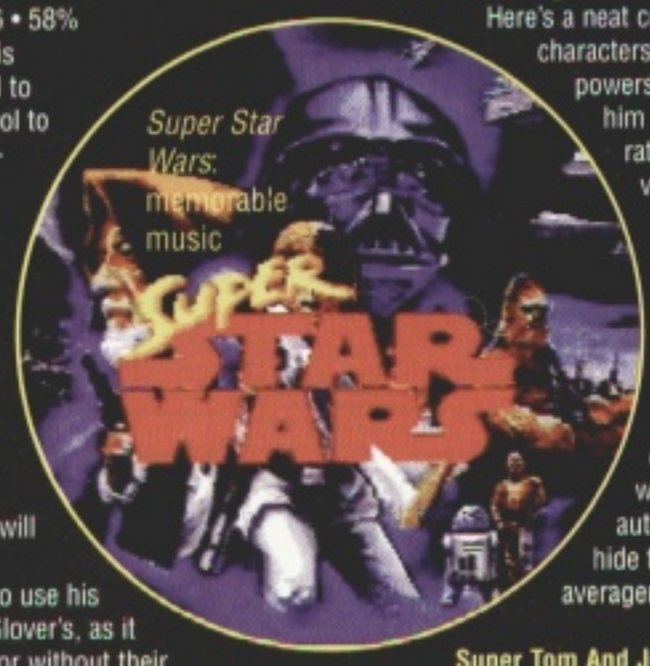
Caveman Ninja 2 • Data East • SP5 • 58%
Not the true sequel to *Joe and Mac* – rather an uneventful game that Data East rather cheekily tacked the Caveman Ninja on to in order to bolster sales. Its graphics and sound rarely rise above the level of perfunctory, while its gameplay never makes it out of neutral.

Gods • Mindscape • SP6 • 74%
It was good game on the Amiga and ST, and it makes a quite passable SNES title. The Bitmap Bros' patented stone/metallic graphics get a favourable airing and the gameplay gets a shot in the arm in the speed department. Not the best-designed game around, but not bad.

Chester Cheetah • Kaneko • SP6 • 58%
Chester, the cat-like dude who his promoters ensure us is 'too cool to fool', proves that he's not too cool to take centre stage in a strictly-by-the-numbers platformer. Garish graphics greet inspid gameplay and proceed to deliver one of the SNES's most forgettable releases.

Lethal Weapon • Ocean • SP6 • 57%
Female SNES-ites hoping to get Mel Gibson on to their machine will be disappointed by this: Ocean couldn't get hold of the licence to use his image in the game (nor Danny Glover's, as it happens). The game itself, with or without their fizzogs, is so typically average it hurts.

Harley's Humungous Adventure • SP6 • 69%
The idea here is that you're a shrunken-down geezer (Harley) who must traverse everyday locations which, while normally harmless, present danger upon danger to such a Tom Thumb-esque adventurer. It's a novel idea that deserves better delivery than it gets.



Super Star Wars: memorable music

The Addams Family In Pugsley's Scavenger Hunt • Ocean • SP7 • 90%
Packed to the gunwhales with touches to make you go 'ooh' and 'aah' (Granny's level, where everything is presented as if looking into a crystal ball is simply wonderful, for example), Pugley's is perhaps not the stormer that we once deemed it. Good fun but no real classic.

The Blues Brothers • Titus • SP7 • 68%
The platform game is not the first genre you'd think of in considering a videogame version of John Landis' classic tale of two unsavoury crims on the run, and when you sit down to play the thing, you'll wish the designers had realised the same. I mean, where's the car chase?

Magic Sword • Capcom • SP7 • 58%
After setting the home gaming world aflame with their peerless conversion of *Street Fighter II*, Capcom promptly spoiled their copybook with a conversion of a coin-op that was never really worth bring home in the first place. Tawdry gameplay plus slowdown equals nob game.

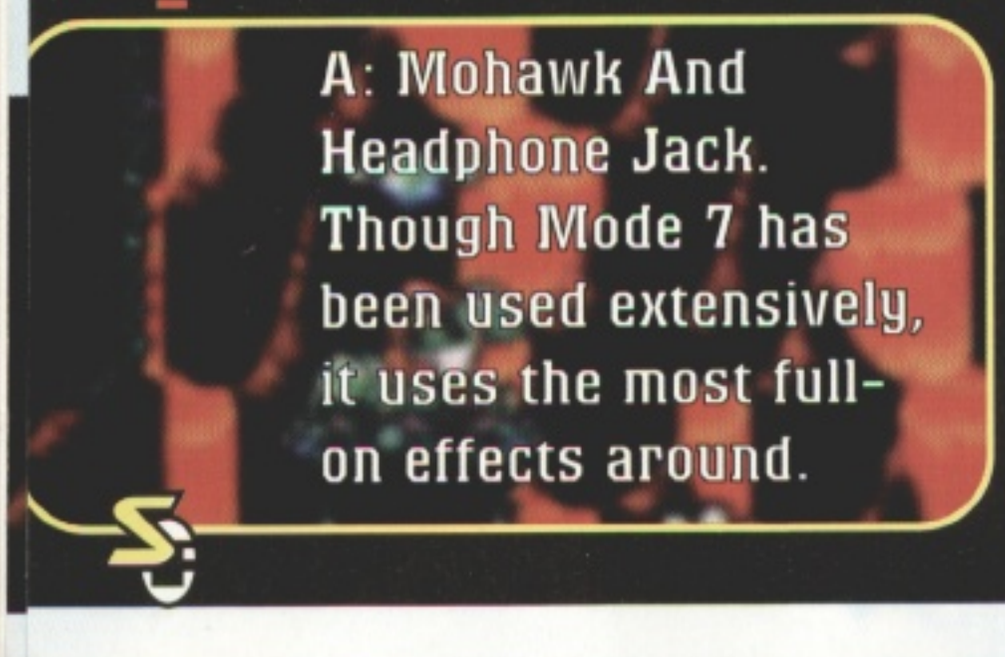
Super James Pond • Ocean • SP8 • 79%
Pond gets the Super treatment in name only as he slops onto the SNES like a tired bloater. Strictly a rip-off of other more famous games (*Mario* being the obvious example), its weak graphics and yawn-forcing playability seal its fate as Just Another Platformer.

The Lost Vikings • Interplay • SP8 • 84%
Here's a neat concept – give the player a team of characters to work with (all with different powers and abilities) instead of forcing him to go out on his lonesome. While rather unnatractive, your three vikings take part in an pleasantly entertaining platform puzzler.

Cool World • Ocean • SP8 • 52%
Even cheap marketing gimmickry (Ocean promoted the game at a FES by claiming that Kim Basinger, star of the movie on which the game is based, would be appearing to sign autographs – she didn't) couldn't hide the fact that *Cool World* whiffs of averageness.

Super Tom And Jerry • SP8 • 42%
The original feuding cartoon duo hit the SNES with none of the excitement that their legendary confrontations so regularly delivered (well, until those crap artists got involved). There's little of the charm here, some horrible slowdown and too many leaps of faith.

B.O.B. • Electronic Arts • SP8 • 54%
Even sports game experts Electronics Arts couldn't be



PLATFORM GAMES?

Q: Where can you turn into a mini Godzilla-type creature, and crawl through a drinking straw and into a monster's intestines?

a lot of fun in itself, gamers appreciate a break once in a while. So let's have some more swimming bits, some more flying sections, some more levels that just affect the way you have to approach the thing – and no, that doesn't mean slippy-slidey ice worlds, but stuff like variable gravity, for example.

Freedom

As games move into the third dimension with the arrival of 64-bit technology, developers should be looking to provide true artificial worlds in their games. And within these worlds they should allow – encourage, even – you to stray from the beaten track or approach something from a different perspective, so to speak. Example: in your 3D platform adventure you spy a little red house atop a hill in the distance. Approaching it reveals it to have three windows, an oaken door and a chimney. Route one is to enter through the door, but think of the fun it'd be to smash a window and gain entry that way or, better still, climb onto the roof and drop in through the chimney. Cor.

Power-ups

One of the fabbest things about *Super Metroid* is your character's ability to grow; by collecting special objects as fairly evenly paced junctures you gain extra powers – powers that are vital to cross certain sections. This concept is one that also made *Zelda* great, and it should be the first on the agenda when developers consider how to give the player more. The beauty is that you then get more mileage out of locations – that seemingly inconsequential area of impermeable rock you passed earlier is worth going back to now that you've rescued a Impermeable Rock Eater monster and have it nestling in your backpack, or whatever.

Scale

There are few things worse than enjoying a dream of a game and having it come to a premature end when you want it to continue for at least ten more levels. So many SNES platformers fall into this category it's a crime – does no-one actually sit down when the game's been developed and say, 'Hold on, I've finished and I've only been playing a few hours!'? We want our games big – big enough to lose ourselves in for days on end.

stopped attempting to create a platform game star, and in this case it's a golden-hued robot who has a fair arsenal of weapons up his sleeve. And yes, you guessed it, he's rubbish and so is his game.

Syo The Seal • Takara • SP8 • 79%
Only one person really appreciated this game when it arrived in the *Super Play* office for appraisal (ex-Art Ed Lisa, whose love of cute things is quite sick-inducing) – everyone else found it duller than John Major's underwear drawer. Heaven knows how it scored 79%.

Alien 3 • Acclaim • SP9 • 84%
Jobbing codeshop Probe put their all into this entertaining attempt at dragging the flavour of the silver screen over to the SNES. The locations get a bit samey and the action likewise, but it has a host of neat presentation effects that make up a slick serving of platform blasting.

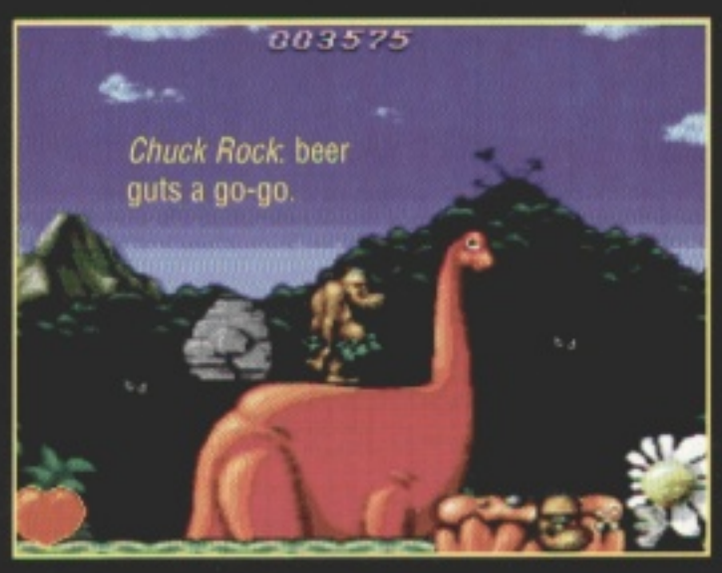
Action Pachio • Coconuts Japan • SP9 • 42%
In the wake of Sega's success with Sonic came a number of pretenders, and this is one of the weaker examples. For a start, your character looks like a ping-pong ball with arms and legs, and the environments he inhabits lack any kind of real excitement at all. Dismal.

Family Dog • T•HQ • SP9 • 39%
Another game based on a cartoon, folks, except this time the cartoon in question is really not bad at all, if memory serves. But T•HQ can't be trusted to make anything other than a dog's ear out of these things, and this is little exception. It's too unfair and boring.

Wayne's World • T•HQ • SP9 • 26%
The best things about this game are its speech samples. Or at least they were when the game first came out – now you'd be hard pushed to raise a titter over expressions such as 'Schwing!'. So you're left with the game. And what a sterling little platformer it is. Not.

Super Turrican • Seika • SP10 • 80%
Sort of a remixed version of the first two *Turrican* games put together, crafted with an attention to detail that compliments its developers, Factor 5. Sadly, however, it never makes it into *Contra* territory, with the bosses especially making it feel like a computer game.

Bubsy In Claws Encounters Of The Furred Kind • Accolade • SP10 • 77%
The proud boast accompanying Bubsy's release was that it was a *Sonic* beater in terms of speed. While we may not contest such a claim (although we *are* dubious), we will say that it doesn't really matter anyway – *Sonic* plops all over it in just about every other respect.



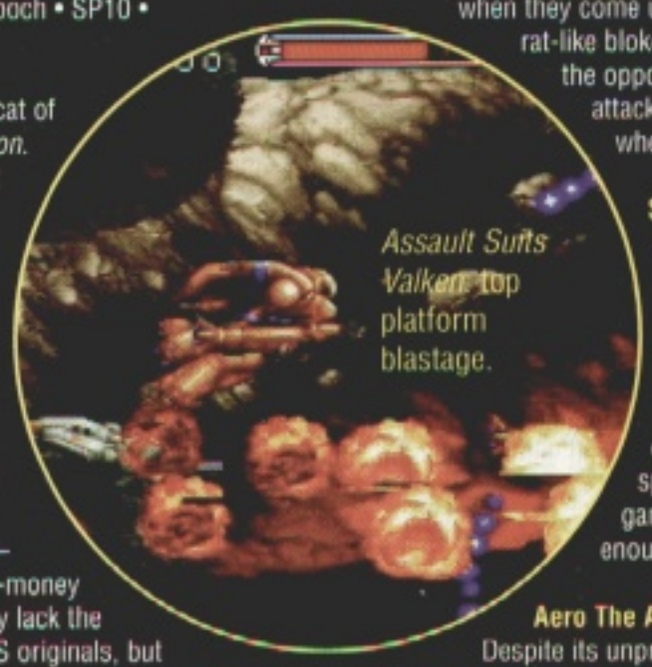
Run Saber • Atlus • SP10 • 59%
The action might present itself as some kind of *Strider*-a-like, but this is about as far from Sega'a classic in enjoyment terms as one could imagine. Despite a nice idea or two (we quite like the bit where you stand on top of a jet plane), it's too easy and dull to warrant attention.

Septentrion • Human • SP10 • 88%
You'll know it as *S.O.S.* if you've been keeping an eye on the US import scene in recent years (*Septentrion* is its Japanese name), and you might already also know that it's unique among SNES platformers thanks to its *Poseiden Adventure* theme and Mode 7 graphics. Overrated.

Doraemon: World Of Fairies • Epoch • SP10 • 56%
An obscure platformer starring everyone's favourite blue-haired cat of manga and anime fame, *Doraemon*. With rather a lot of Japanese text flying about it's difficult to tell what the heck's going on, and simplistic gameplay, this is one you shouldn't worry about missing.

Super Mario Collection • Nintendo • SP11 • 96%
Bringing together four of Mario's outings on one cart was a masterstroke on Nintendo's part – this is perhaps the best value-for-money SNES title going. Some parts may lack the subtle control nuances of the NES originals, but no-one should miss this chunk of gaming history.

Asterix • Infogrames • SP11 • 70%
When we first looked at this we were impressed by its faithful-to-the-comic sound effects (PAF! etc) but uninspired by its lack of action and blatant peddling of crusty old themes. Today it looks even more tired, of course, and it's one not worth spending any time with.



First Samurai • Kemco • SP11 • 80%
When Amiga owners saw this there were cries of 'Hurrah! Our machine *can* compete with consoles after all!'. But the journey to the SNES is rather pointless one, and regardless of many neat little touches, it's still far behind the best of what the Japanese can muster.

The Ren And Stimpy Show: 'Veediots' • T•HQ • SP12 • 47%
It's a T•HQ cartoon-based effort, so you know the drill by now. Actually, this isn't nearly as bad as the likes of *Family Dog*, with some decent graphics and plenty of original ideas. There's perhaps only about an hour's worth of fun here, though, which is simply a crime.

Out To Lunch • Mindscape • SP12 • 84%
Pierre Le Chef is the hero in this, a vertically scrolling oddity which charms the pants off of anyone who sees it. It's a simple concept – you merely have to collect up items of food and plop them in a cage – but it's delivered with such panache that it's impossible not to love.

Super Back To The Future II • Toshiba EMI • SP12 • 61%
Unlike any other platformer around, this doesn't require you to run around; instead, as in the Good Bit from the film, you hover inches above the ground on a hover board. Such an interesting idea is thoroughly wasted on such an unchallenging and tiresome game, though.

Rocky Rodent • Irem • SP12 • 50%
Goodness us. You know developers are struggling for ideas when they come up with a game whose star is a rat-like bloke who uses his hair to doff over the opposition. Learning all Rocky's attacks is quite engrossing at first but when the novelty's worn off it palls.

Super Widget • Atlus • SP12 • 54%
Another example of the seemingly interminable line of games with polymorphing characters in. The big shame here is that despite being able to change forms – be it into a spider or a crab or whatever – the gameplay doesn't really change enough accordingly. Tawdry stuff.

Aero The Acrobat • Sunsoft • SP13 • 84%
Despite its unpromising premise (you, as Aero, are some form of circus performer), this is easily one of Sunsoft's better attempts at a platformer. Be warned, though – the churning, repetitious music will surely make you feel ill and it lacks the ingenuity of Mazza World.

Mr Nutz • Ocean • SP13 • 86%
Ocean's French development arm did a sterling job with this, a woodland romp with tasty

What do you mean you don't know anything about...

Passing eggs that big's *gotta* hurt.

potty with big sword).

The more cutesy approach didn't go away, however, and the likes of *Wardner*, *Wonder Boy*, *Pac-Land* and *Bubble Bobble* (the latter two titles proving especially popular with female gamers) scooped up the loyal fans of more traditional platform experiences.

In the home, the launch of the NES in 1985 allowed console gamers to play a nigh-perfect version of *Super Mario Bros.* (Contrary to popular belief, the coin-op and the NES *don't* share common technology – the NES version was a conversion in its traditional sense.) The third game in the series, equipped with a custom graphics chip, was the next landmark in the platform genre's existence, but it wasn't until the SNES arrived that gamers truly saw what potential the theme held, with games such as *Super Mario World*, *Super Metroid* and *Yoshi's Island*.

WHY SO MANY?

Which more or less brings us to today, where we find the market clogged with platformers. Just why are there so many of them available on the SNES? There are two main reasons: (a) The first ever SNES game was a platformer, and its appearance immediately gave developers the (often misguided) notion that they too could make themselves a similarly styled title and earn a packet; and (b) They're relatively easy to

graphics and super-slick gameplay. There aren't many surprises to be found, however, and some will no doubt find its buck-toothed star just a little bit too cutesy for comfort.

Super Putty • System 3 • SP13 • 84%
Another computer game conversion lurches into console land to predictable effect. There are scant few improvements and, while its graphics are bright and bold enough, you're rarely reminded that it's a SNES that you're playing with here. It has many fans, though...

The Incredible Crash Dummies • Acclaim • SP13 • 41%
Crash Dummies is one of those games where you have to play each level over and over until you know exactly where to run and where to brake, where to jump and where to fall. It's massively irritating in this respect, of course, and the dodgy characters help not a jot.

Skyblazer • Sony Imagesoft • SP14 • 78%
A potentially great game which builds up nicely and supplies a number of neat touches (such as a *Nebulus*-esque rotating tower) but ultimately proves about as challenging as armwrestling a newborn baby. Novice gamers should definitely hunt it down.

Time Slip • Vic Tokai • SP14 • 60%
An attempt to cash in on the themes so expertly explored in *Contra*, *Time Slip* does it with none of the grace of Konami's game. With crude backdrops (did someone say C64?) and some baffling bits of design, Vic Tokai's effort is a bad case of ripping off something poorly.

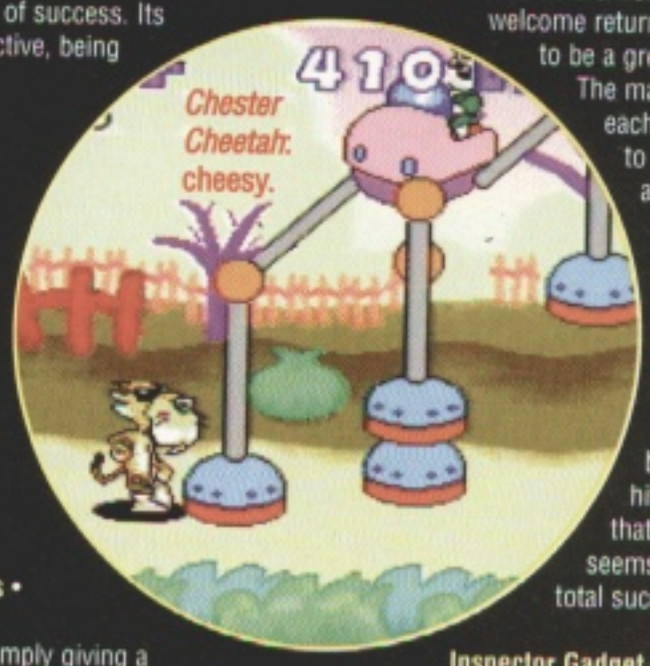
Plok! • Tradewest • SP14 • 90%
Software Creations (the guys behind isometric-3D adventure *Equinox*) reinforce their reputation with a pedigree platformer that – shock – has a central character who manages not to be naff. *Plok!*'s strengths are its playability, refreshing presentation and great music.

Robocop Vs Terminator • Virgin • SP14 • 27%
Well, Virgin's programmers certainly had the right approach to this game's graphics – everything is dark and moody, and they are some atmospheric cityscapes. Sadly, someone forgot to ask them to put some effort into the way it plays. Its deficiencies are numerous.

Aladdin • Capcom • SP15 • 81%
Another victim of the platform game fan's worst (but depressingly frequent) nightmare – that of offering very little challenge – Capcom's film conversion nevertheless holds true to their reputation, with glossy graphics and enjoyable, if largely uneventful, gameplay.

The Lawnmower Man • Storm • SP15 • 77%
Despite being based on such a cliché-ridden movie, *The Lawnmower Man* genuinely attempts to deliver some novel ideas – to varying degrees of success. Its graphics, in particular, are distinctive, being crisp and clear, but the game underneath lacks excitement.

Alfred Chicken • Mindscape • SP15 • 83%
Platform Game Fact Number One: a geezer dressed up as Alfred Chicken ran in a local election in a (rather pointless) effort to promote the game's release. Worringly, he picked up a handful of votes. Anway, perhaps he deserved them – his game's not bad at all, actually.



Daffy Duck: The Marvin Missions • Sunsoft • SP15 • 65%
When will developers learn that simply giving a character lots of different weapons and some colourful levels in which to run around and use them is simply not enough? Daffy is a typical offender, bringing absolutely nothing new to a genre that desperately needs it.

Super The Empire Strikes Back • SP15 • LucasArts • 71%
Despite commiting the crime of being ridiculously similar to its forefather, *Empire* sold pots and pots. Most of the film's main reference points are present and correct, though, and those sad enough to still quote from George Lucas' film today will find themselves in heaven.

Actraiser 2 • Enix • SP16 • 69%
It might have more luscious graphics than its predecessor, but *Actraiser 2* misses one vital point: it's not very much fun to play. Musician Yuzo Koshiro had a hand in game design this time around, but can't save it from destination: UnplayablyDifficultsVille.

Zool • Gremlin • SP16 • 65%
It's always a crying shame to see games released on the SNES just to make a fast buck, and *Zool* is a perfect example of the sort of game that the machine can simply do without, what with having such timeless Japanese-produced efforts available. Bland and pointless.

Mega Man X • Capcom • SP17 • 88%
Some people have never seen the appeal of Mega Man – they may have a point: his exploits look slow-paced against the likes of *Super Metroid* – but his first visit to the SNES proves mildly entertaining nonetheless. Not worth that 88% mark in retrospect.

Pink Goes To Hollywood • Tecmagik • SP17 • 76%
A fairly typical, harmless platformer with a floaty feel that you'll either instantly get along with or instantly despise. The Hollywood setting gives an excuse for Pink to visit various film locations, some providing half-smiles, some just plain getting on your wick.

Rainbow Bell Adventures • Konami • SP18 • 70%
Konami's characters from *Pop 'n' Twinbee* make a welcome return in a game that had the potential to be a great deal better than it turned out. The main problem is its lack of focus: each level is *huuuge* and you tend not to get involved in the proceedings as you'd like to.

Humans • Gametek • SP18 • 70%
If only *Lemmings* knew what it was starting... Gametek's attempt to twist DMA's classic concept into something a little bit more flash looks-wise is a hit-and-miss affair. It's a game that has its fans, but the action seems rather too contrived to be a total success.

Inspector Gadget • Nintendo • SP18 • 71%
Lord only knows how Nintendo got involved in publishing this, a platformer programmed by Bomberman creators Hudson Soft of all people. With an array of special abilities to call upon (extendible arms, etc) Inspector Gadget is also true to the cartoon by being forgettable.

Soccer Kid • Ocean • SP18 • 84%
Upon first playing, this appears to be a very silly game – your weapon is a football which, when shot, is liable to just zip off all over the shop, necessitating some hasty running about as you attempt to retrieve it. Stick with it,

A: Hudson Soft's mad-in-the-head Super PC Kid. Rarely has there been a game so hat-standishly entertaining.

PLATFORM GAMES?

Q: Which SNES game was promoted in the US by a phone number which you dial to be greeted with insults from the game's baddy?

write (especially when compared to RPGs, for example). (Er, although at four years in the making, *Yoshi's Island* took longer to develop than any SNES game of any variety, but it's a special case.)

Nowadays there are really only four distinct types of platformer on the SNES:

- Yer standard platform game, a prime example of which would be *Super Mario World*.
- The platform shoot-'em-up, *Super Metroid* being a good case in point.
- The platform slasher, a quite rare breed – an example being Activision's *X-Kaliber 2097* – that involves bladeplay as you traverse a usually quite simplistic platform environment.

You tell Ollie it's the last *Super Play* ever and he puts upside-down beetles on the page. Honestly.

- The platform beat-'em-up, another pretty unpopular variety that, because you need a bit of space to fight in, uses pretty straightforward platfrom layouts.

The SNES has the best examples of the first two categories of any machine around (and probably the best examples of the latter two as well, but they're not worth bothering with, generally speaking), and it is absolutely the machine of choice for the platform head.

With *Star Kirby Deluxe* soon to enjoy an official UK release, *Donkey Kong Country 3* in the offing, and another *Mario* title rumoured to be in the works from Nintendo themselves, one of the oldest game genres in the book doesn't look like giving up the ghost just yet, In fact, looking at the strength of *Super Mario 64*, it could just be getting into its stride...

Say goodbye to all the lovely *Super Play* readers out there, Yosh.

though, and you'll find an acceptable little game.

Lester The Unlikely • Nintendo • SP18 • 52%
Lester is unlikely because he's a geek, see. Not a good start. Its attempt at redemption is its use of rotoscoping, and your character's movements certainly benefit from this based-on-real-life approach. But there the fascinating stuff ends all too abruptly. A nob game.

Bugs Bunny: Rabbit Rampage • Sunsoft • SP19 • 58%
There's no doubting Sunsoft's ability to deliver the classic Warner Bros flavour here – Bugs and his adversaries look truly marvellous as they bimble about – but they've struggled to include a fun factor to match. Ultimately it's as predictable as an *EastEnders* script.

Magic Sword: a Capcom flop.

Super Metroid • Nintendo • SP20 • 92%
Few people predicted that this would be as special as it turned out. Nintendo's team, headed up by Game Boy designer Gumpei Yokoi, create a spellbinding alien world of action and intrigue. Think action platformer equivalent of *Zelda III* and you're halfway there.

X-Kaliber 2097 • Activision • SP20 • 68%
Marred by some magnificently failed music and a selection of bad guys who look like they've just stepped off the pages of the very worst kind of American comic book (although we still like one of their names – Spuke), *X-Kaliber 2097* is a repetitious platform slash-'em-up.

The Flintstones • Taito • SP20 • 54%
Being one of the most blatant copies of *Super Mario World* in existence is no guarantee of success for *The Flintstones*, which gobbles up Nintendo's ideas, chews them about a bit to avoid a lawsuit, and vomits them back on the back in an infinitely less appealing form.

Super Troll Island • American Softworks • SP20 • 70%
The appeal of Trolls is one of life's great mysteries, but it was nevertheless enough to ensure a game based around them and their sickly sweet world. Sort of like a platform game update of the coin-op *Amidar*, this will only be enjoyed by anyone with a – hnngh – Troll keyring.

Time Trax • T•HQ • SP20 • 73%
T•HQ In Not A Bad Game At All Actually Shocker! Seriously, Time Trax is one of the few examples of worthwhile TV-series-to-videogame journies. With some juicy graphics in places (including some neat Mode 7 adversaries), it's fun stuff, but hardly a milestone.

Mickey's Ultimate Challenge • Hi-Tech Expressions • SP20 • 54%
In *Super Play*'s opinion, 'edutatainment' should stay on the PC where it belongs. Hi-Tech believe otherwise, however, but their case isn't helped by something that presents a series of subgames which benefit very little from being delivered in a videogame environment.

Joe & Mac 2: Lost In The Tropics • Data East • SP21 • 80%
With some splendid visuals and the legacy of the first game upon which to build, you'd expect this to be a fine, fine game. And to a large extent it is, with varied locations and some chucklesome moments. Just don't expect to get more than a few days' play out of it.

The Jungle Book • Virgin • SP21 • 82%
If you've ever been driven up the wall by those 'famous' *Jungle Book* tunes, then don't even consider playing this – it's jam-packed full of them. Virgin deliver fairly routine platform action, spiced up with some lush backdrops and some nifty character animation.

Magic Boy • JVC • SP21 • 75%
It may look like a pile of nob when you first flick the 'on' switch, but *Magic Boy* isn't the disaster that its primary-school graphics suggest. It's not the most cerebrally challenging platformer around, but its simplistic gameplay is fine in an old-fashioned sort of way.

Cool Word. most uncool.

Speed Racer • Accolade • SP22 • 65%
Another part-platformer part-something-else is *Speed Racer*, its passable racing sections married to some horribly stilted jumping-around bits, which give new meaning to the word unplayable. Even if you're a retro anime buff and love *Speed Racer*, best give this one a miss.

Beauty And The Beast • Hudson Soft • SP23 • 71%
A pleasantly attractive beast, with all the twee characters of the film present and correct, but sorely lacking in action. Beast is a lumbering great geezer, with about as much athletic prowess as Bernard Manning and the game calls upon pixel-perfect jumping skills.

Hammerin' Harry • Irem SP23• 77%
Another SNES game that takes a coin-op and buggers around with it for a bit before presenting a new (and supposedly improved) version, Harry only rarely achieves the potential offered by the concept of running around whacking things with a big hammer.

Jim Power • Electrobrain • SP23 • 76%
The first – and only – SNES game to use special 3D glasses (you know, like those ones they use in that cinema thing at Alton Towers and suchlike), *Jim Power* is a bit of a novelty from start to finish. Its platform bits are only a small part of the equation, and pretty boring.

The Jetsons • Taito • SP23 • 70%
Taito surprised us on *Super Play* by coming up with a totally new idea in platformers, the POP. It's merely a sucky/blowy vacuum-cleaner sort of thing wielded by the character you control (George Jetson) but it alleviates the otherwise dull gaming. Nice Mode 7, too.

Loderunner Twin • T&E Soft • SP24 • 55%
Having been around the videogaming block a few times ourselves, *Super Play* had lofty hopes for this SNES update of one of computer gaming's classics. Our heads drooped when we discovered – despite a split-screen two-player mode – a very tawdry effort, however.

Super PC Kid • HudsonSoft • SP24 • 75%
Bonk is the name of *PC Kid* in the States, and Bonkers is certainly the most appropriate word for this game. It's an out-and-out loonathon as you stuff like changing into a Godzilla-type creature and get sucked into a baddy's digestive system. Mad, nuts and playable, but too easy.

Sparkster • Konami • SP25 • 89%
One of Konami's lesser-known characters makes it to the SNES (after making his debut on the Mega Drive) in a memorable fashion, bounding around a series of levels packed with wolf-like adversaries and encountering a number of spot effects that Konami can do.

Super Ninja Kun • Jaleco • SP25 • 68%
A little-known but pleasantly diversionary oriental effort which tries its hardest to emulate the values so majestically flaunted by Konami's *Goemon* (or *Mystical Ninja*) series. Few *Super Play* readers will ever get the opportunity to see it, but if you see it for a couple o' quid second-hand, pick it up.

Jelly Boy • Ocean • SP25 • 61%
The malleable star of this is about as loveable as a lump of doggy do, such is the stupidity of his expression and the portliness of his

What do you mean you don't know anything about...

stature. Despite giving you the opportunity to morph into stacks of different shapes, the opportunities they afford are never completely explored.

The Smurfs • Infogrames • SP25 • 80%
A scarily challenging game which, typically of Infogrames, holds remarkably accurate facsimiles of the characters upon which it's based. While it certainly doesn't have the spark of a Nintendo-produced game, *The Smurfs* is a rare example of a decent cartoon licence.

Demolition Man: fun bungee bits.

Mickey Mania • Sony Imagesoft • SP26 • 87%
Before attempting to do Pixar's magnificent *Toy Story* justice in game form, Traveller's Tales worked on titles like this, a Mickey Mouse vehicle which charts his progress right from his black-and-white cartoon days. Really rather clever, if a touch tired in places.

Animaniacs • Konami • SP26 • 28%
A shockingly weak showing from SNES miracle workers Konami, offering little more in gameplay terms than a memory test. The graphics and animation will please fans of the show, but they will feel especially miffed that their heroes appear in such an ill-conceived title.

Pac-In-Time • Namco • SP26 • 84%
Fundamentally based on the Amiga game *Fury Of The Furries*, *Pac-In-Time* sees Namco's famous yeller feller – swinging, hammering and swimming his way around umpteen levels of ghost-populated turf. Not an immediately inspiring game, but well worth getting in to.

Donkey Kong Country • Nintendo • SP27 • 90%
The game that sold a million (or five) Super Nintendos, Rare's premier ACM title will go down in history as being one of the highest-profile releases on the format. That 90% rating may have been overly enthusaistic, mind, 'cause it's not a patch on the likes of *SMW*.

Blackhawk • Interplay • SP27 • 76%
A *Prince Of Persia* with sawn-off shotguns, *Blackhawk* is a platformer that requires a mix of thought and out-and-out aggression. Notable for allowing you to blow away innocent captives (er, though we don't condone it), it's an involving game that just misses the mark.

Jurassic Park 2 • Ocean • SP27 • 83%
If cinematic intro sequences are your bag, you'll find none finer than the one found on *JP2*'s front end – it's packed with animation and even a stack of digitised speech. It's pretty good in-game too, with lots of action to go looking for and hordes of things to blow away.

Demon's Blazon • Capcom • SP27 • 80%
An extension of the series that started on the Game Boy as *Gargoyle's Quest*, *Blazon* is one of the best-looking SNES games ever, with eery backdrops and atmospheric use of colour. Gameplay is fine too, but it's all over so soon that it'll make you weep.

Nosferatu • Seika • SP27 • 75%
Like *Blackhawk*, *Nosferatu* takes its inspiration from *Prince Of Persia*, throwing out the turbans-and-pantaloons imagery and replacing it with non-specific heroics against the forces of the supernatural. Zombies and Dracula himself turn up in this limited affair.

Mickey And Minnie • Capcom • SP27 • 73%
Following exactly the same gameplay set out in *Mickey's Magical Quest* – except this time you can play simultaneously with a second player controlling Mickey's main squeeze – this is expertly presented and very jolly fun indeed. If only it was a bit more challenging.

Kid Klown In Crazy Chase • Kemco • SP27 • 80%
Of all the platformers on the SNES (and Lord knows there are many), *Kid Klown* is the most distinctively presented. From an isometric-3D perspective, you control the daffy fellow as he attempts to reach a goal at the bottom of each level. Not a true platformer and too easy.

Bonkers • Capcom • SP27 • 74%
We can't imagine that there are enough fans of the *Bonkers* cartoon for this to sell on the strength of the character alone, so it's left down to the game to make this a viable purchase. And it fails. Graphics are typically Capcom-cute, but there's nothing to write home about.

Pitfall: The Mayan Adventure • Activision • SP27 • 79%
Activision were early exponents of the retro-gaming phenomenon (and why not – they have an extensive range of classic games of the past), and this is a fair attempt at an update. It includes the original as a bonus level, but suffers in the longevity stakes.

Ren And Stimpy: Time Warp • T•HQ • SP28 • 51%
'Hey, Steempy, are we going to star in abother steenky videogame?' 'It certainly looks that way, old chum.' 'What, one that's going to shamelessly use our toilet-humour appeal to disguise a formulaic, tired effort with little consideration for gameplay?' 'Uh-huh.'

The Adventures Of Mighty Max • Sony Imagesoft • SP28 • 83%
83%? What were we thinking? While this is certainly competent enough, with sprawling levels containing lots of to-ing and fro-ing puzzly-type stuff, the diminutive graphics and rather sappish nature of Max himself rather spoil the party.

Mary Shelley's Frankenstein • Sony Imagesoft • SP28 • 69%
Let's face it, no-one wants to control a lumbering, brain-dead oaf of a characater (er, although WWF games seem to be hugely popular), but that's exactly what's asked of you in this, an ugly monster of a game with shoddy collision detection and lame graphics.

Wolverine: Adamantium Rage • Acclaim • SP29 • 60%
Wolverine! What a geezer! And what a clinker of a game to put him in! It's not just the pointlessly repetitious nature of the graphics that disappoint here, but the way that you never really feel as though you're a hard-as-nails superhero. A big disappointment.

X-Men: Apocalypse • Capcom • SP29 • 52%
Where Acclaim failed, Capcom do also, with a hugely uneventful platform beat-'em-up that only rarely captures the flavour of Marvel's premier band of wrongs-righters. Graphics and sound fail to match Capcom's best work, but it's the gameplay that's most insulting.

Ardy Lightfoot • Titus • SP29 • 83%
A seriously lightweight attempt at a Jolly Platformer With An Appealing Lead Character, we were too generous to Ardy when it came under our normally faultless glare. It's not that there's anything glaringly wrong with it, it just lacks the spark of a great game.

Earthworm Jim • Virgin • SP29 • 91%
When Dave Perry broke away from Probe to form Shiny Entertainment, few expected him to enjoy the success that he has. Fewer still expected him to make his forture off the, er, back of a worm, but that's just what happened. This is fine stuff indeed, packed with humour.

The Lion King • Virgin • SP29 • 82%
Come and take a trip to Yawnsville, as Virgin show us epitomical license-by-numbers platforming. Actually it's not that bad, just predictable, as screen after screen of flora and fauna scroll into view while you attempt gameplay that's as old as the hills.

The Pagemaster • Virgin • SP29 • 61%
After turning up like a turd on the sole of videogaming in T•HQ's *Home Alones 1* and *2*, Macauley Culkin makes a reappearance as a brat in this run-of-the-mill tale of fantastical hi-jinks. Some of its visuals are neat in places, but you'll drop off long before the end.

Earthworm Jim 2: slick.

Michael Jordan: Chaos In Windy City • Electronic Arts • SP29 • 83%
Rather like Ocean's *Soccer Kid*, this gives you a spherical projectile which can be luzzed at nasties from a distance. A very daft game indeed, with straight platforminess interspersed with dunking bits straight out of a sports title, it's quite playable nevertheless.

Mega Man X2 • Capcom • SP30 • 80%
Capcom have a nasty habit of resting on their laurels, and are perhaps videogaming's biggest believers in the phrase 'If it ain't broke, don't fix it'. After foisting instalment after instalment of *Street Fighter* upon us they're doing it with Mega Man. Just like the first game.

Indiana Jones • JVC • SP30 • 29%
Developed for LucasArts by German codehouse Factor 5, Indy's SNES adventure is a right royal disappointment. It captures the taste of the movie trilogy admirable (or at least its graphics do), but there's nothing here to suggest much time was spent planning it out.

Super Return Of The Jedi • JVC • SP30 • 79%
Super Play was there to tell the truth when everyone else awarded this game top honours. We saw that the concept already used in the previous two games was running out of steam, and played our reviewing cards accordingly. Aren't you glad we're here for you?

Super Morph • Sony Imagesoft • SP30 • 86%
Yet *another* game intent on hammering away at the concept of shape-changing characters, *Super Morph*'s lead is one of the more convincing variety. If you can bear the disgusting graphics (and the amateur presentation in general, in fact), you'll find it fine and dandy.

Super Turrican 2 • Ocean • SP31 • 84%
The SNES gets a good old workout as it's forced to perform technological marvels in this very enjoyable sequel. Just about everything is new, and the developers learnt from their mistakes in the first game by providing some imaginative boss characters and set pieces.

Warlock • Acclaim • SP31 • 68%
Interesting Videogame-Related Fact Number 2: The star of the movie on which this is based (Julian Sands) is the cousin of *ex-Super Play* Ed James Leach. It's an unusual

A: The piratic adventure, Sküljagger. Who knows where American Softworks got the idea – it flopped on a grand scale.

PLATFORM GAMES?

game, very pretty in places but prone to being not very player-friendly and occasionally just dull.

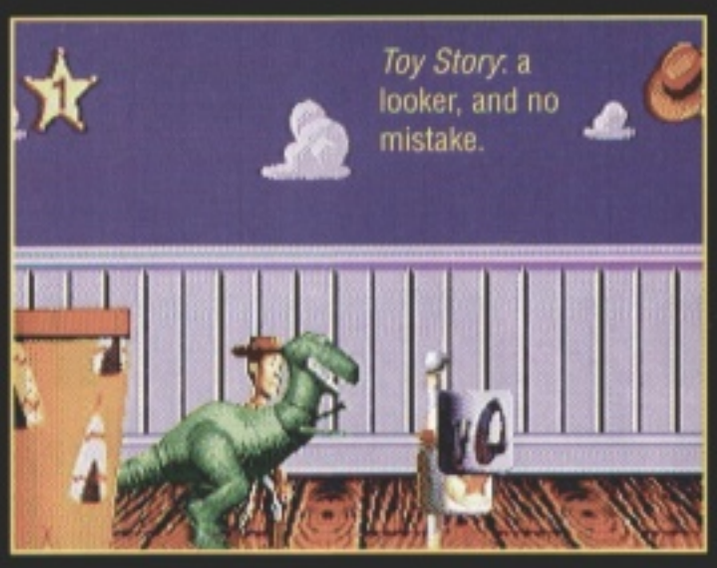
Sink Or Swim • Titus • SP31 • 55%
In a race against time, you're attempting to rescue survivors in this simplistic get-it-right-the-first-time-or-you-might-as-well-forget-about-it puzzly platformer. Graphics, gameplay and sound content are all so old-fashioned that it makes no sense.

Hagane • Virgin • SP32 • 74%
Hudson Soft did the legwork on this surprise UK release that many deemed too Japanese to ever make it to the West. It's an all-out actioner with an endearing line in challenge and loads of weird and wonderful foes to slash to pieces. No classic, but worth a peek.

Stargate • Acclaim • SP32 • 60%
Like the film on which it is based, *Stargate* is packed so full of holes that you could use it to strain yer spuds. Lacking any fizz whatsoever, it's the very worst kind of licensed product, farted out of a production line codeshop with little regard for the player's enjoyment.

Boogerman • Interplay • SP32 • 56%
Games which rely on gimmickry tend to get our goat – games with ridiculous gimmickry even more. Which is why this little bleeder – something that sells itself on the 'strength' of base toilet humour – didn't turn us on. Simply being crap didn't help its chances, either.

James Pond 3 • US Gold • SP32 • 77%
Arriving about four years too late, *Pond 3* is a rather cringe-worthy attempt by British coders to try and outdo what the Japanese have been doing best for years. It falls down on almost every count, but remains entertaining enough if you're new to platformers.


Toy Story: a looker, and no mistake.

Putty Squad • Ocean • SP32 • 89%
An example of what British platform game developers do best – slick, shiny but ultimately rather bland examples of the genre – *Putty Squad* pleases with its neat characters and largely quibble-free game plan. There's bugger all to blow your socks off, but it's fun.

Mr Tuff • Ocean • SP32 • 74%
As the Tuffster, armed with a hoofin' gurt (as they in Somerset) demolition ball, you stomp about busting up stuff in this colourful, if rather basic, affair. Tuff is the sort of character who tries so desperately to be charismatic but ultimately fails to have a personality.

Judge Dredd • Acclaim • SP34 • 82%
Yet *another* game that we deemed better than it really was when we appraised it (hey, blame our guest writers), Judge Dredd is the sort of game that you can imagine was created on Probe's Platform-O-Matic game-making machine. Though tidy, it's very dull.

Time Cop • JVC • SP34 • 15%
We rather cruelly subjected Zy to review this movie license, and he had to hold his nose as he waded through its stale guff-like stench. Some of the backgrounds are quite pretty, but the digitised sprites are abysmal and as for the way it plays, well, words fail us...

Castlevania: Vampire's Kiss • Konami • SP35 • 80%
Although lacking the genius of the SNES original, *Vampire's Kiss* is still a worthwhile spin-off from the Castlevania legend, with super graphics, a choice of routes, and nefarious denizens by the cartload. Lower your expectations of Konami a little and you'll enjoy it.

Prehistorik Man • Titus • SP35 • 76%
Super Play got in 'trouble' with Prehistorik Man's publishers for not saying it was the best thing since the invention of the Big Mac, but if you know your platformers you'll see immediately that it's not nearly as clever as it likes to think it is, just very pretty.

Yoshi's Island • Nintendo • SP36 • 94%
The bee's knees, the gnat's elbows, the beetle's ankles of platform games, where Yoshi plays lead role in a mammoth adventure where pleasure and amazement lies around every corner. There's tons to see and even more to do in this, a title that excels in every single area.

Time Cop: whiffier than rotten eggs.

Obelix • Infogrames • SP36 • 60%
Although the boar-devouring porky Gaul's name is given the headline, *Asterix* also crops up as a second character in this largely merit-free scrolling beat-'em-up with a few platforms thrown in. Though there's some welcome humour, predictability is the watchword.

Demolition Man • Acclaim • SP36 • 75%
It doesn't exactly play like a dream, but *Demo Man* at least tries to be exciting, with gun action aplenty, bungee jumping and rope slides. The futuristic feel of the movie is also transferred across quite well to give this actioner slightly-above-average status.

Beavis And Butthead • Viacom • SP36 • 39%
Boy, were we dismayed at the shoddiness of this game. MTV-heads will lap up the many references to the show (check out the title screen, where you can force those famous heh-hehs at the touch of a button), but its failure to be any fun whatsoever is almost upsetting.

The Mask • T•HQ • SP38 • 70%
Corking animation is the real star of this surprisingly competent T•HQ effort. As Stan the man you're able to use many of the special abilities that were the highlights of the movie, but it's better suited to younger players than those expecting groundbreaking stuff.

Mega Man 7 • Capcom • SP38 • 79%
Capcom continue to bemuse everyone with their choice to bring a continuation of the NES series to the SNES rather than concentrating on the X series. The result is something that smells musty and moth-eaten. Still better than many other companies' efforts, though.

Phantom 2040 • Viacom • SP38 • 78%
The purple-clad superhero prances his proud form quite convincingly in this pleasantly above-average cartoon license. While there's a vague hint of shoddy presentation about the thing, it's big and tough enough to make for a neat game. Oh, and there's a mobile suit in it.

Aaahh!!! Real Monsters • Viacom • SP38 • 65%
Adopting a similar principle to that of *The Lost Vikings*, the protagonists here are ugly little scuzzbags rather than Nordic warriors with unruly hair. Viacom can't quite pull it off with the success of Interplay, mainly due to the simplistic nature of the puzzles you face.

Earthworm Jim 2 • Virgin • SP39 • 85%
It was difficult to see how Shiny would come up with much to overshadow their first Jim vehicle, but this they did, providing loads of madder-than-a-balloon sections, including one where you wield a giant marshmallow cushion to save little puppies. It's fabbo, is this.

Frantic Flea • Gametek • SP39 • 29%
Frantic Flea was designed by a company whose expertise lies in the area of animation – and it shows. That is to say that it bears some fine character movement and distinctive backdrops, but also the hallmarks of a team who obviously know very little about good game design.

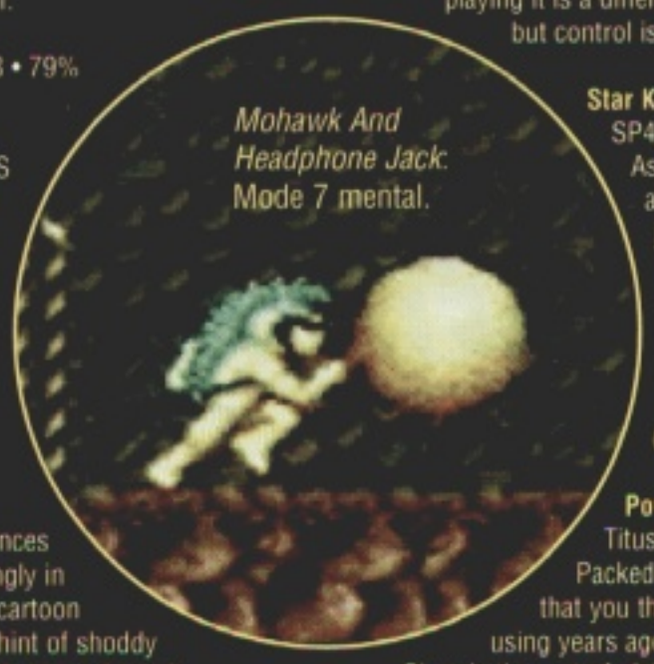
Tintin In Tibet • Infogrames • SP39 • 25%
Another one that the long-suffering Zyster got roped in to taking apart, at first *Tintin* looks quite promising, with the plucky young adventurer in well animated form. It doesn't take long for the scum to rise to the surface, though, making it yet another poor cartoon licence.

Diddy's Kong Quest • Nintendo • SP40 • 82%
Hailed by some as the equal of *Yoshi's Island* – which it quite patently is not, but then you'd be surprised at how little some people in the industry actually know about games – this is certainly better than the original, but has some way to go before reaching Mario status.

Porky Pig's Haunted Holiday • Sunsoft • SP40 • 72%
Dynamic Mr Pig most definitely is not, and his SNES debut holds true by being one of the least stimulating platformers we've ever seen. Sunsoft go through their usual motions by supplying some neat graphics, but they still can't get their heads around gameplay, it seems.

Mega Man X3 • Capcom • SP42 • 70%
Meggy gets all hessy for a third time in this technically sound yet far from spectacular series. All the usual stuff – the different weapons and themed stages, etc – is present and correct, and this time you even get to control Zero. Capcom's biggest cash-in yet, probably.

Toy Story • T•HQ • SP43 • 79%
Technically it's difficult to fault *Toy Story* – even compared to the likes of the Super FX-powered *Yoshi's Island* it manages to surprise and astound with its trickery – but playing it is a different matter. It's quite challenging, but control is suspect and design uneven.


Mohawk And Headphone Jack: Mode 7 mental.

Star Kirby Super Deluxe • Nintendo • SP44 • 89%
As Wil said, 'Slick, colourful and addictive with a difficulty curve just the wrong side of easy. Ignore his distinct lack of street cred and just enjoy another platform masterpiece, the like of which you won't find on any other platform – 16- or 32-bit'. (Cheers, Wil.)

Power Piggs Of The Dark Age • Titus • SP45 • 42%
Packed with the sort of components that you thought game designers gave up using years ago (conveyor belts, crushers, etc), *Piggs* is the sort of platformer that makes you think *Yoshi's Island* never even happened. The wind chutes idea is nice, but it's way over-used.

Mohawk And Headphone Jack • T•HQ • SP46 • 57%
And you thought you were safe from Mode 7... Here's something that'll make your head spin for the first time for yonks – a full-on Mode 7-fest to test even the sturdiest of guts. The programming techniques on show are tidy, the game itself quite the opposite, sadly.

THE SUPER PLAY CHEESE EMPORIUM

PURVEYORS OF PARTICULARLY CHEESY VIDEO GAMES SINCE 1992

SEPTEMBER 1996 ISSUE 47

Good morning, Sir, Madam. Welcome to our establishment. I see you walked straight past the Super Play Museum Of Modern Classics next door, a wise choice. Our little shop is far more interesting. We've been stocking the cheesiest videogames for nearly four years now. What did you say? How cheesy? Let me assure you, the stuff we dish up in here is rank. The whiffiest selection of fetid, moulding, gut-churningly curdled guff that anyone could ever wish to happen across. Let me show you some of our finest stock.

The Classic Cheese Selection – Our Ten Most Popular Brands brandished in a specially easy-to-select format for the first time in video gaming history. Clothes pegs and air fresheners at the ready... off we go...

1. Pitfighter

Ah, the most pungent of all videogames. Based on a poor coin-op, this stinker delivered atrocious graphics, hideously jerky animation, only three fighters to choose from and no special moves, weapons or powerups whatsoever. The coin-op featured scaling, the cartridge did not. The coin-op's digitised characters were a novel touch. Those on the cartridge were an incomprehensible mess. Its stench is so bad it almost goes beyond the range of most people's sense of smell. *Pitfighter* is truly deserving of its position as Most Cheesy SNES Game In The World.

Rated 14% Issue 4

2. Jeopardy

So dreadfully ripe was this product, we had it shipped in from America specially. It's a heady translation of a popular US quiz show in which the host says the answer, and the contestants have to provide the question, sort of. The whole concept doesn't really work at all, and the poor implementation on the SNES makes it even worse. Laughable digitized contestants spasm their badly-animated way through reams of shoddy general knowledge questions for no real reward. They never really even bothered to capture the visual aspects of the show either. A real nose shriveller.

Rated 15% Issue 7

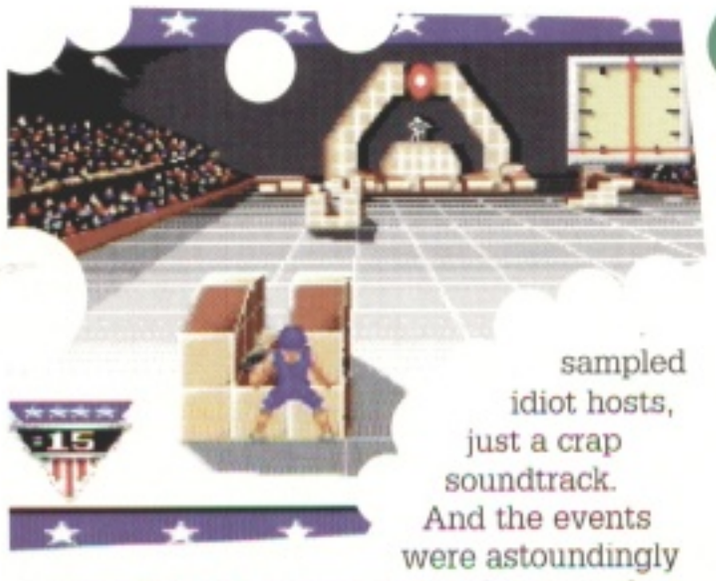
3. Time Cop

Mmmm, some of our most noisome niffs have been inspired by motion pictures. Have a whiff of this one. The movie, while a little cheesy itself, was mostly okay. But the game, my oh my, the game was astoundingly aromatic. Van Damme was digitised especially for the occasion, but then things went wrong. His comical jumps and kicks saw him floating awkwardly over the enemies' heads. The smart bomb took a full five seconds to explode, the bad guys shot each other, the list goes on and on. Take a game, turn every good aspect into a bad one and you have *Time Cop*.

Rated 15% Issue 34

4. American Gladiators

Another mould-flecked offering from our friends across the pond. Based on the TV show it managed to capture none, yes NONE, of the amusingly over-the-top atmosphere of its telly counterpart. The graphics were pathetic, and the sound effects were, well, missing. That's right, no effects, no



sampled idiot hosts, just a crap soundtrack. And the events were astoundingly poor. Desperately unresponsive controls made moving what you assumed to be a human being across the screen most tiresome. And curiously, it was from the same people who brought us *Jeopardy*.

Rated 16% Issue 10

5. George Foreman's KO Boxing

Most boxing games are awful, but rarely are they as dumb as this. For a start, the star is George Foreman, or "Sad Old Fat Get' George Stupid Bloody Foreman" as we like to call him. Then there's the huge ring and small characters problem, which is made worse by the fact you can't even move left and right. And you can't see what the player at the back is doing in a two-player game. And there's no skill involved, just button bashing. And the fighters do a rubbish dance when they win. And it features George Forema... oh, we've done that bit, haven't we? Still, you get the picture.

Rated 18% Issue 2

6. Super Bikuri Man

What is that I smell? Has my binliner split? Has the dog guffed? Has my Gran (who smells slightly of wee) come to visit? No. It's CHEESE. But it's disguised as a beautiful perfumed rose. This beat-'em-up tried to be like *Street Fighter II* and nearly pulled it off. After all, its graphics were actually quite pretty and the animation none too bad. The characters were fairly interesting too. But when played, oh dear. It was possible to repeatedly press a single button and finish the game in ten minutes flat on the hardest skill setting. Yes, as we said, cheese.

Rated 18% Issue 7

7. Vanna White's Wheel Of Fortune

First there was *Jeopardy*, and then *Wheel Of Fortune*. The single redeeming feature was that it featured Vanna White, an all-American blond hostess with a big white dress on. But in retrospect she was a bit of an old slapper anyway. As for the game, well, as we said in our review all those years ago it was like "a game of hangman, one in which half the answers are weird Americanisms that you couldn't possibly guess." To make it worse it wasn't even particularly user-friendly. The controls were slow making the eventual task of answering one of the dismal questions all the more frustrating.

Rated 19% Issue 2

8. Kawasaki Caribbean Challenge

What's the betting one of the programmers thought up this idea so that they'd get a free promotional trip to the Caribbean? It certainly wasn't so that they could come up with a really interesting game. It was a race game set in the Caribbean, and before each course you'd get a bit of island history. Very nice. But the game stank. In only the way a very old, very dead, and very gently warmed thing could stink. The crappy little bikes and jetskis (yes, two vehicles were available) zipped around incredibly basic courses without an ounce of flair while the SNES's mode 7 widget twiddled its thumbs in angst. Laughable.

Rated 20% Issue 11

9. Last Action Hero

If this game really were a cheese it would be one of those dry, crumbly ones that you always find when you need some cheese on toast but can neither slice it or grate it because it's so crumbly. Imagine *Double Dragon* done even worse. Walk along, stop, wait for enemies to appear, punch (and watch an poorly drawn arm which is seemingly unconnected to your body) pop out and send the enemy flying without even touching him. Repeat this process until your eyes bleed and you begin to get the picture. Film licences are all right these days. This is a chilling reminder of the way they used to be.

Rated 21% Issue 16

10. California Games II

California Games, a sport sim based on made-up events played by wannabe-actor-beach-bum-types. Still, it was quite a laugh at the time. But a sequel? Come on. This is the calorie-free, low-fat, spreadable cheese version of the first game. For 'calorie' read 'gameplay' and for 'fat' read 'fun'. To its credit, some events used Mode 7. To it's shameful discredit, they were a pile of guff. Surely screwing up a Mode 7 section is like having a Ferrari at your disposal and not being able to figure out how to get it out of first gear, stupid and wasteful. The events, maybe we should explain the events. Naw!

Rated 22% Issue 7

11. Cliffhanger

We had a little nickname for this game back in the *Super Play* office of old. We called it Cliffwanger, because it was, quite literally, nob. We won't bore you with the details, but the story is much the same as for *Last Action Hero* back up there at number nine.

Rated 22% Issue 16

12. Toys

You know how Robin Williams was great once and really funny and that? And you know how everyone got bored of him? Well, this game, based on the movie starring, yes, Robin Williams, was never even good in the first place. Watch the fetid fumes rise from this blue veined wedge.

Rated 24% Issue 9

13. The Hunt For Red October

Oh that the Red October had remained lost. Then we wouldn't have had to put up with this, this, this waterlogged, sodden, bilge pump of a game. It's the old story of crappy little sub, meets other crappy little subs and exchanges crappy little torpedoes which are barely two pixels high.

Rated 25% Issue 7

14. Pacific Theater Of Operations II

Brrr, a cold chill has blown across the cheese counter. This one is still very fresh in our minds (although from the smell, you'd think it had been around for decades). An excruciatingly dull wargame with graphics to put a Game Boy to shame. The shame is on you Koei.

Rated 25% Issue 44

15. Tin Tin In Tibet

I'd rather sit in a room full of camembert which is being rapidly aged by means of the careful application of a blowtorch flame by tramps who only wash once a year and their big day is tomorrow, than play this monstrous trash. That, my friends, is precisely how very smelly *Tin Tin In Tibet* is.

Rated 25% Issue 39

16. Wayne's World

If anyone says "Schwing" I'll shove a cheese straw up their ar.. Actually did you know that cheese straws went out of production some yeaRs ago? They were made in Cheddar but demand dropped off in the mid eighties, I think. This tragic loss was reported on the local news and everything.

Rated 26% Issue 9

SPECIALITY CHEESES

The Superscope

How could we ever forget the glorious Superscope? It was a light gun, plain and simple. But did Nintendo make it sleek, small and gun-shaped? No, they bloody well did not. Instead they produced a heaving great rocket launcher with far too many buttons, which needed batteries and which cost around three squillion quid. And the games? Ho, ho. The six free games (rated 32-49%) were most amusing. All were pump, and most were entirely unsuited to being played with a light gun. Of all the quirky Nintendo off-shoots this is, without a doubt, the very cheesiest.

Superscope – the Wensleydale of SNES accessories.

17. Robocop Vs Terminator

It's just been pointed out that maybe the readers would like to know a little more about the games regardless of how rubbish they are. Sprawling meandering levels, baddies who never actually get near you, badly structured challenges, no music. By the way, whatever happened to Lymeswold cheese?

Rated 27% Issue 14

18. Aliens Vs Predator

Robocop Vs Terminator. Aliens Vs Predator. How very bloody cynical. Tell you what, let's write a game called, really-smart-famous-top-interesting-bloke Vs great-big-strapping-equally-top-bloke-who's-rock-hard-and-famous. No need for any gameplay, is there? I think Churnton is the new Lymeswold actually.

Rated 28% Issue 6

19. Outlander

Ooh (sniff), oh, yes, Hmm (sniff), oh my, phew, (sniff, sniff), Caw, blimey, I say, (sniff), wha..., pheweee, (sniff), whoa, grngh, (sniff), yeeuuch. That is something very special. Quick, put the lid back on. Ah, that's better. I'm right, aren't I? That was *Overlander*.

Rated 28% Issue 8

20. Animaniacs

(To be sung to the theme tune of the rather brilliant Animaniacs cartoon, obviously). "It's time for Animaniacs, and they smell of old men's cacks, the gameplay rather lacks, it's cheesy to the max, they're Animaney, rank and stain-y, they're Aaa-ni-maniii-aaaacs... Leave well alone."

Rated 28% Issue 26

21. Paperboy 2

What a great idea *Paperboy* was. An all-action, rip-roaring simulation based on newspaper deliveries. And they had the gall to do a follow-up. As if the idea wasn't bad enough, then there was that uncontrollable bike and not quite isometric graphics. Ouch.

Rated 29% Issue 2

22. James Bond Jr

007, licence to kill, etc. Never mind that Roger Moore's portrayal finished up as a laughably geriatric affair with the old fool pretending to ski in front of a blue screen special effect. Surely his offspring would offer some action. No. Crap platform bits and sub-standard shoot-'em-up bits prevailed.

Rated 29% Issue 3

23. World Soccer

Maybe there was a great game beneath it all, but why on earth did the pitch keep spinning around? Technically impressive it wasn't, and it also meant you couldn't tell which way you were supposed to be playing. Neither could the computer players as far as we could tell.

Rated 29% Issue 14

24. The Death And Return Of Superman

Oh for a big jug of iced Kryptonite juice and heatwave in Metropolis. Why couldn't the stupid old crimson and blue idiot just stay dead? A game in which the world's greatest flyer opts to walk through most levels and in which it's hard not to get your invulnerable teeth kicked in for no apparent reason.

Rated 29% Issue 25

25. Indiana Jones

This should have been an epic, surely? Based on the most adventurous trilogy of films ever, yes? But no. The entire game seems to rely on leaps of faith, hazards that you have no way of anticipating and baddies that have intelligence roughly equal to that of a slinky. Pump is not the word. Neither is dross. Cheese is most probably it.

Rated 29% Issue 30

26. Frantic Flea

In much the same way as real fleas nibble on your soft parts and cause endless irritation, so this game inflames and irritates every gameplaying organ in your body. Every golden platform rule is broken, and every programming crime committed. It's a shambles. No, it's worse than that, it's a huge Edam left out too long without clingfilm wrap.

Rated 29% Issue 39

27. Justice League

The Justice League Of America were an important part of our comicbook upbringing. A collective of like-minded individuals, pooling their disparate resources to the common good. Ah, but how things change when you have a licence to pay for and the limitation of a videogame. In the event these heroes were turned into vegetables. Potatoes in fact, with cheese on as it happens.

Rated 30% Issue 34

SPECIALITY CHEESES

Surely not Super Play

Super Play has never been cheesy, oh no. And issue seven wasn't cheesy per se (per se? that's a bit cheesy, isn't it?). But for software reviews, issue seven stank. It featured ten games rated below 50%. Worse than that, the highest scoring of these was 46% and that was exceptional. The rest were all in the 30's with the lowest, *Jeopardy*, scoring only 15%. Let us all doff our headwear and observe a minutes silence for the lifeless corpse that was *Super Play*, issue seven.

Otherwise known as the gouda edition.

28. Captain America

Captain America? Captain Parmesan more like. For like that particularly stenchworthy type of cheese which people claim to enjoy sprinkling on their pasta, it's a lot of old cobblers borne of gastronomic and comicbook tradition. Parmesan stinks. So does Captain America. Leave the former off your pasta and the latter off your SNES.

Rated 30% Issue 13

29. Sonic Blast Man 2

Let's take a look at the rather pathetic facts. Sonic Blast Man was a coin-op with a punch bag. You had to punch the punch bag in order to destroy the buildings and whatnot on the screen. How on earth does that translate onto a console? Moreover, how does it accommodate a sequel? Answers on a Kraft Single please.

Rated 31% Issue 23

SPECIALITY CHEESES

It's called what?

In the time we've been reviewing games here at *Super Play* we've come across some pretty awful game names. So much so that there's no overall winner (or loser). *Harley's Humungous Challenge* is pretty stupid, but what exactly is a *Dead Dance 8*? *Doraemon: World Of Fairies* is a downright bizarre concept while *Lester Unlikely* is just, well, unlikely. And what about *Ahh, Real Monsters*, *Hammerin' Harry* and *Panel Du Pon*? And if we wanted any proof that the Japanese are a few noodles short of a stir fry then *100% Cotton* is surely it. Then there are all the games prefixed by "Super" which really shouldn't have been. *Super Back To The Future II*? Come on.

And finally, *Super Ninja Kun*... Hmmm.

30. Home Alone 2

Macaulay Culkin. If he were a cheese he'd be Dairylea. Because then we could peel his sorry ass and batter his creamy head all over a slice of bread with the sharp end of a kitchen knife. Perhaps we're being a tad harsh. Then again, perhaps we're not. An appaling platform based sequel, to an appalling platform based first game.

Rated 32% Issue 3

31. Warpspeed

The stifling stench of old fromage even reaches far into space. *Warpspeed* was a *Wing Commander* sort of game with loads of missions and campaigns. However, it was excruciatingly dull and you only ever got to fight one enemy ship at a time (because of some ridiculously bad use of Mode 7).

Rated 32% Issue 7

32. Full Throttle All-American Racing

Two sections, one a motorcycle race, and the other a jetski race. Both are vile. The former has no sense of motorbikiness at all and the second is so slow that if it were any slower it would be played backwards. Smells like your fingernails after a packet of Wotsits (and we all know how nasty that is, don't we?).

Rated 32% Issue 32

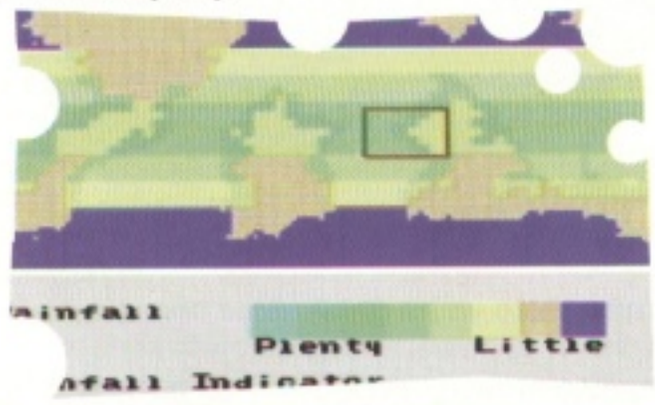
33. Psycho Dream

You are a Japanese character, you have either a flashing blade or a whip. You wander relentlessly from left to right throughout the whole game and kill anything that appears before you. That's it. That's everything there is to this pathetically shallow little mess of a game. The Japs can write brilliant games. They can also create ones of Gorgonzoloid proportions.

Rated 33% Issue 7

34. Sim Earth

It's bad enough that this overly textual PC game was brought to the SNES in the first place, but they could at least have made an effort on the technical side. Even the scrolling is bad, rolling along about as smoothly as a square Edam. And who really wants to control an eco-system on their console anyway?



Rated 34% Issue 9

35. Super F1 Circus 2

Part of the reason this game got this score was because it cost £69 on import. However, even if this out-of-date tube of liquefied pineapple Primula had been £20 it would have been a rip-off. The Mode 7 was nice, but the gameplay was stiflingly poor. Races took an age and you rarely got to see any other cars on the track. Dismal.

Rated 34% Issue 13

36. Home Alone

MacCaulay Culkin might be a pimple on the movie industry's backside, but to be fair, *Home Alone* was a fairly amusing movie. The only chuckles to be had from the game are those of the people at THQ who laughed with glee as countless poor saps handed over their cash on the strength of the film licence.

Rated 34% Issue 3

37. Race Drivin'

Hard Drivin' was originally developed as a full blown simulator to teach people to drive. But they made it into a very tedious coin-op instead. And then they had the gall to bosh out a sequel which was worse still. The only good part about the coin-op was the graphics, and they didn't translate at all well. Stupid, stupid, stupid.

Rated 35% Issue 3

38. Road Riot 4WD

A split-screen buggy racing game. There's no reason at all why it shouldn't have been great fun. But it wasn't, it was rubbish. No, it was worse than that, it was completely awful. We'd like to insert a cheese reference here, but we'd have to resort to something so gross, and so very, very rude, we'd probably get taken to court.

Rated 35% Issue 4

39. Ushio And Tora

A very bizarre game which appears to be a scrolling beat-'em-up but in which you only ever seem to come up against Boss type characters. More alarming than the spectacular lack of gameplay is the spectacular lack of moves. Waggle your weapon (behave), or sort of prod your weapon in the general direction of the enemy.

Rated 35% Issue 7

40. Hungry Dinosaurs

Oh dear. They may be hungry, but I reckon these dinos would very rapidly lose their appetites if they had to step out of the game and get a whiff of what they'd been appearing in. It's *Othello*, but played really fast, and when the timer runs out, the Dinosaur who's laid the most eggs wins. Eh?

Rated 35% Issue 40

41. Winter Olympics

There were ten full olympic events in this game, so the least we could have expected was some variety. We were disappointed though. Every last one of them was dull beyond measure. Bobsleigh, downhill, Ski jump... surely excitement abounded. Sadly not.

Rated 35% Issue 20

42. Cacoma Knight

(Alison, shall we do it? It's a bit obvious isn't it? But then again, this crappy little Qix type puzzler's just crying out for a cheap slagging off. Oh I don't know, such puerile humour is probably below us, isn't it? What? Oh, it isn't? Okay then.) *Cacoma Knight*? Ha! Cack-oma Knight more like.

Rated 36% Issue 4

43. Uncharted Waters

This game had *Zelda*-style graphics, but we weren't fooled, oh no. Your little on-screen character had to wander around ports and sail ships across maps of the sea, trading goods and making pretend money off the back of this trading. And it was brilliant! Ha, just kidding, this is, after all, one of the 50 worst games of all time. It was dross, plain and simple.

Rated 37% Issue 7

44. Mecarobot Golf

Outwardly it appears to be a perfectly normal golf game apart from the fact it's an especially niffy example of the genre. But niffiness aside, it features, for some reason, a player who's a robot!!! Those three exclamation marks represent our utter disbelief. In fact, so disbelieving are we, we'll print some more!!!!!!!!, and !!!!!, and !!!! for luck.

Rated 37% Issue 14

45. Battletoads/Double Dragon – The Ultimate Team

About as "ultimate" a combat team as a minor assemblage of eighty year olds who have all tragically had their limbs cut off in a freak drive-by maiming outside the post office on pension day. *Double Dragon* games were always very poor. God knows why the *Battletoads* went anywhere near them.

Rated 37% Issue 16

46. Acrobat Mission

Nothing to do with acrobats at all. In fact this is a very flat, very dull, very easy, sonically awful shoot-'em-up that looks like it was knocked out in five minutes on one of those "design you own games" packages that you used to get for home computers and which always produced desperately shoddy results.

Rated 38% Issue 2

47. Carrier Aces

Hideous little action game in which you have a series of guffy little battles. There's a split screen dogfight section but don't get all excited. It was one of the worst examples of its type ever. And trying to sink the enemy ships was painful.

Rated 39% Issue 34

48. Beavis And Butthead

"Heh, heh, heh, this game sucks, Beavis, heh."
"Yeah, heh, it sure does."
"Uh, Beavis, heh, we're in this game, heh, heh."
"Oh."

Rated 39% Issue 36

49. Star Trek TNG: Future's Past

We don't want to insult any trekkies out there, but anyone who bought this game was one of the worst examples of an anorak ever. If you fell for this licence you should be locked up for ever for fear that you might injure yourself in some way.

Rated 39% Issue 21

50. Super Godzilla

You'll notice we kind of stopped doing the cheese references on this last page. As we're sure you'll appreciate it's hard enough to stretch a single joke over a whole feature especially when it's a particularly flimsy one in the first place. Anyway, Godzilla. Sounds a bit like Gorgonzola doesn't it? That's appropriate since this game reeks of, all together now, "CHEESE".

Rated 39% Issue 25

SPECIALITY CHEESES

Rise of the Robots

Given 35% way back in issue 29, *Rise Of The Robots* marked a peak in the triumph of hype over common sense. As Mirage were developing the game there was much talk about it being a revolutionary beat-'em-up. In truth it was all fancy graphics and very little gameplay. If you jumped over your opponent you couldn't even turn to face him for God's sake. However, when finished, Acclaim distributed the thing, spent huge amounts of money marketing it and managed to sell loads. It was everywhere. In fact, even if you knew it was crap you felt a bit stupid if you didn't buy a copy. A triumphantly disastrous game, and a disastrously triumphant campaign of hype. Cheesemongers, the lot of us.

And there goes my groin.

DRAGON

CHARACTER ASSASSINATION

Two brothers, a fighter with an electrical special move, a fighter with stretchy arms and a fat competitor? Wait a minute, we really have seen it all before in *SF2*. Let's do some maths...

SON GOKOU

Ollie Alderton haircut + orange suit + fireball special = Ken from *SF2*.

VEGETA AND VEGETTO

Brothers + Fashion victims = Ken and Ryu from *SF2*.

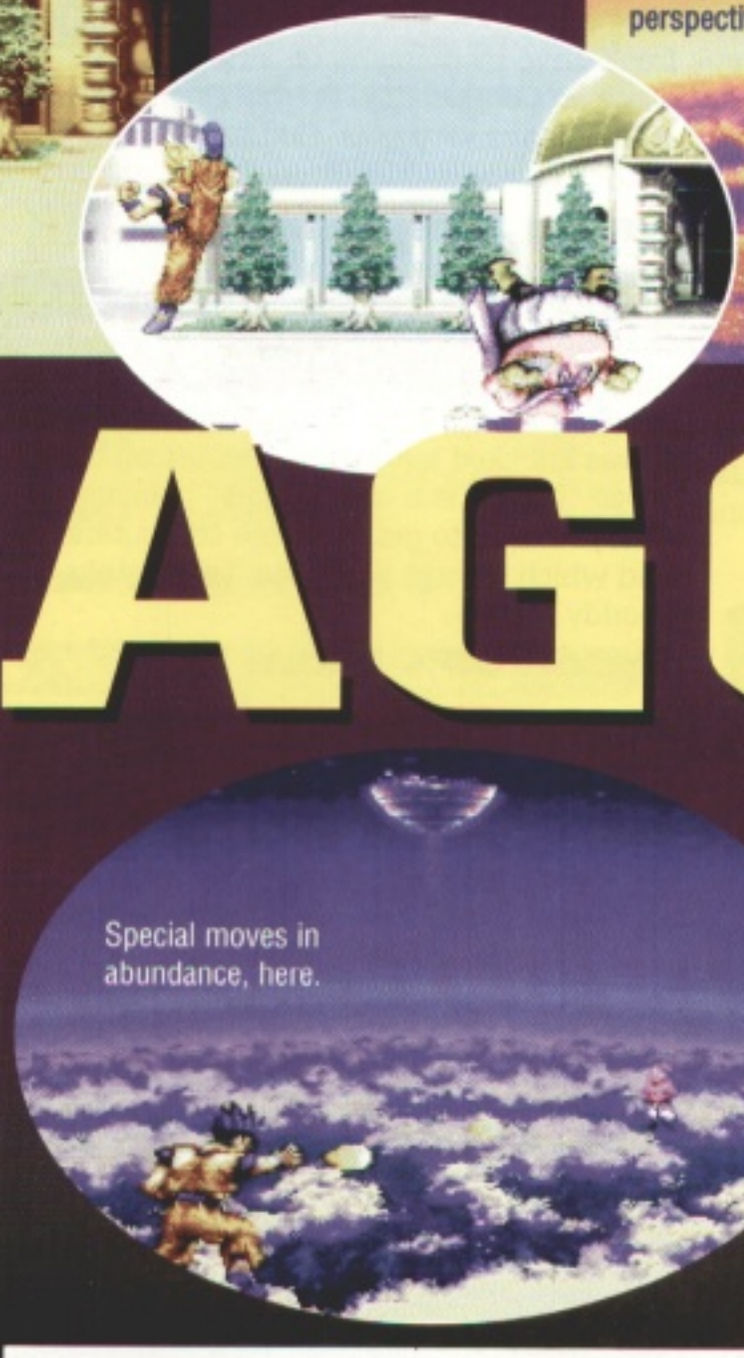
PICCOLO

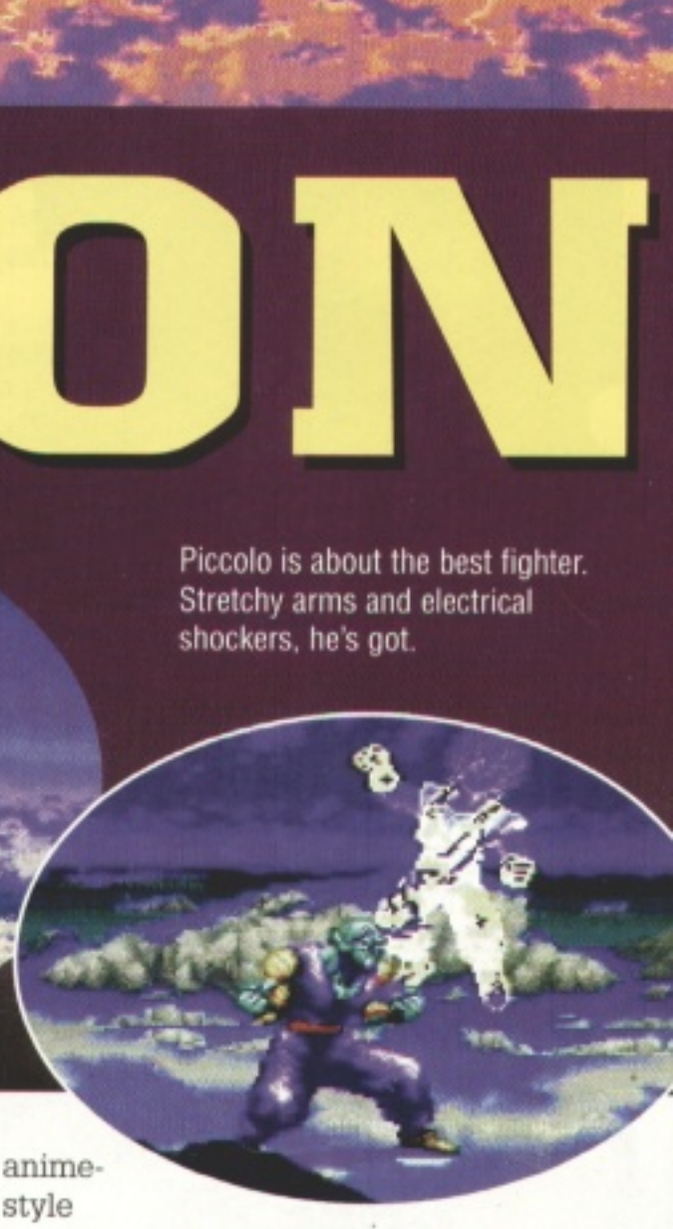
Stretchy arms + the looks of a horse's arse = Dhalsim.

MR BOO

Fat + Fat = Zangief.

Conclusive proof, then, that *Dragonball* is *SF2* and *SF2* is, in fact, *Dragonball*. Interesting, indeed.





It's rather akin to buying an Oasis album. Without the abysmal lyrics, of course. Indeed, to say that *Dragonball Z* is a collection of new ideas would be to say that Oasis don't extract 'inspiration' from The Beatles. The point, you see, is that *Dragonball Z* isn't a new game. Or, at least, it is, but can only claim to be the fourth in a long running series.

And, to be honest, it hasn't really changed a great deal in that time. The characters are different, certainly, but the graphical style and presentation remain uncannily similar. Not that that's necessarily a bad thing. The previous efforts were, after all, more than up to scratch. It's just, well, it does all seem a tad unadventurous, does it not?

Let us consider the facts for a moment: the first three games in the series incorporated anime-style graphics and sound effects. *Hyper Dimension* goes for much of the same. There can be no doubting that the visuals are excellent with some gorgeously constructed backgrounds and flashy, explosive colours at the onslaught of every special move. And the sound effects are an entertaining mix of samples and typically weird Japanese banter. But, frankly, it's a disappointment that nothing new has been added to the playing environments and although the characters have made the transition to the SNES from the animated tale pretty much unharmed, none of them show any signs of graphical improvement over their counterparts in the first three games.

Right: DBZ fighter, Freeza.

Above: Um, Freeza. Again.

... but lacking in original gameplay. Such a pity, it really is.

Japanese Release

Game: Dragon Ball Z Hyper Dimension
Publisher: Bandai
Developer: In-house
Price: Check with importer
Release: Out now
Players: 1-8 Players

On loan from: High Res Game Zone, tel: 0171 792 1323.

DRAGON BALL Z HYPER DIMENSION

Funny, this. Because, you know, I'm sure I've seen it all before somewhere...

Choose from five locations in all...

The special moves themselves also seem ludicrously similar to those featured in the previous incarnations. To name but two, Son Gokou still looks up to the sky and surrounds himself in a white flame before launching into a combo and Mr Boo still uses his expansive rear end to rid the screen of his enemy. Considering that the game has been in development for anything up to the last 15 months, it does seem rather sad that the programmers couldn't treat gamesplayers to a new selection of moves. Fortunately, however, they are still as easy to pull off as before so it won't take the uninitiated too long to satisfy a craving for fireballs and lasers.

There are several redeeming features, however. The first of these is the inclusion of the excellent eight-player knockout competition from *Dragonball Z 3*. This helps raise *Hyper Dimension* above other average beat-'em up fare as it means – if you have friends and a supersaver card for Threshers – that the game quickly becomes essential multi-player entertainment.

And the split screen mode that so many people criticised in the original has been removed to further *Hyper Dimension*'s claims to be the next *Street Fighter 2*. Indeed, if the previous efforts were trying to distance themselves from the aforementioned Capcom fighter then this one does rather the opposite and moves closer than ever to the style of the SF series.

Aside from this, though, *Hyper Dimension* doesn't really have much to offer as a continuation of the *Dragonball* series. Unfortunately it's far too similar to the first three games to make much impact as a follow-up and, as a stand alone product, falls way short of challenging *Street Fighter 2*.

● **Tim Weaver**

DRAGONBALL Z HYPER DIMENSION
Bandai

GRAPHICS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
85%	80%	72%
GAMELIFE	OVERALL SCORE:	71%
70%		

VERDICT: A surprising score, you may be thinking, considering the technical expertise on show. Well, yes, but technical excellence can never compensate for a spot of original gameplay and, sadly, *Hyper Dimension* lacks it in abundance.

US Import

Game: Jimmy Houston's Bass Tournament U.S.A
Publisher: American Sammy
Developer: in-house
Price: Ask importer
Release: Out Now
Players: 1
Cart ROM: 12Mbit

Craw Worm or Rubber Skirted Jig with Pork? I'll settle for worm from the garden and a jam jar full of smelly pond water.

Americans, eh? They always steal our sports and go and make them bigger and better than ours. If they ever get hold of tiddly winks it'll probably end up having Nike thumb pads and five million dollar-a-season players with their own endorsed gold winks (and a low audience slot on Channel 4 – heh-heh).

The world of Jimmy Houston, therefore, makes the stereotypical view of fishing in the UK look just a tiny bit sad. There are no middle-aged men nipping out on a Sunday afternoon to escape the 'family' and catch some z's sitting next to the local reservoir here. Oh no. Jimmy 'The Cookson Kid' Houston roars out to worry Bass everywhere in a Miami Vice style power boat and takes his family with him. Not only are his two sons both pro-anglers, but his wife is as well (hey, you can't knock the title Mr & Mrs World Champion 1972).

Bass Tournament tries its damnedest to be as realistic as possible, although the option to accidently leave a bucket of maggots in the back of the car only to unexpectedly find and open it some months later, thereby releasing a black humming plague of bloated blowflies, is sadly missing. The lakes are, apparently, so accurate that if you found a good fishing spot in the game you could go there on holiday and it would still be a good spot in real life. You can also choose the time of day, year and even the weather conditions, and the game will know if it's actually possible to have snow in August in Carolina at 12 noon (it's not, by the way). It's unfortunate then that there are still occasions when you'll choose your set-up and spend ages without catching so much as a 4oz Black Crappie only to have Jimmy's smiling mug happily tell you that in these conditions the only thing you'll catch will be a backache.

As with most of these fishing games (and there are more than you may think), proceedings are split into two distinct sections. There's Practice mode where you suss out the best spots and hone your technique with such choice lures as the Lipless Suspended Crankbait, and Tournament mode where your prowess at embedding sharp pieces of metal in unsuspecting aquatic wildlife is tested against

Hey! That's not a Bass.

SEPARATED AT BIRTH?

Jimmy Houston, demon fisherman and feared by Largemouth Bass throughout North America, and Mike Flowers, purveyor of easy listening novelty records and feared by anyone with ears (even though we all chuckled at Wonderwall) Is someone not telling us something?

Fish or foul? You decide.

JIMMY HOUSTON'S

Jimmy's got a big boat and he's gonna use it.

THE MANY FACES OF JIMMY HOUSTON

Years of presenting 'Jimmy Houston Outdoors' on TV and writing books like 'The Wit And Wisdom of Jimmy Houston' have given the Cookson Kid a wealth of experience in standing on boats in the middle of lakes. During practice mode he'll happily pass on many gems of fishy trivia to you, complete with a little digitised graphic of Jim himself so you can immediately tell whether he's happy or sad. Can you tell what Jimmy's thinking?

Listen to Jimmy and you'll be sure to reel 'em in.

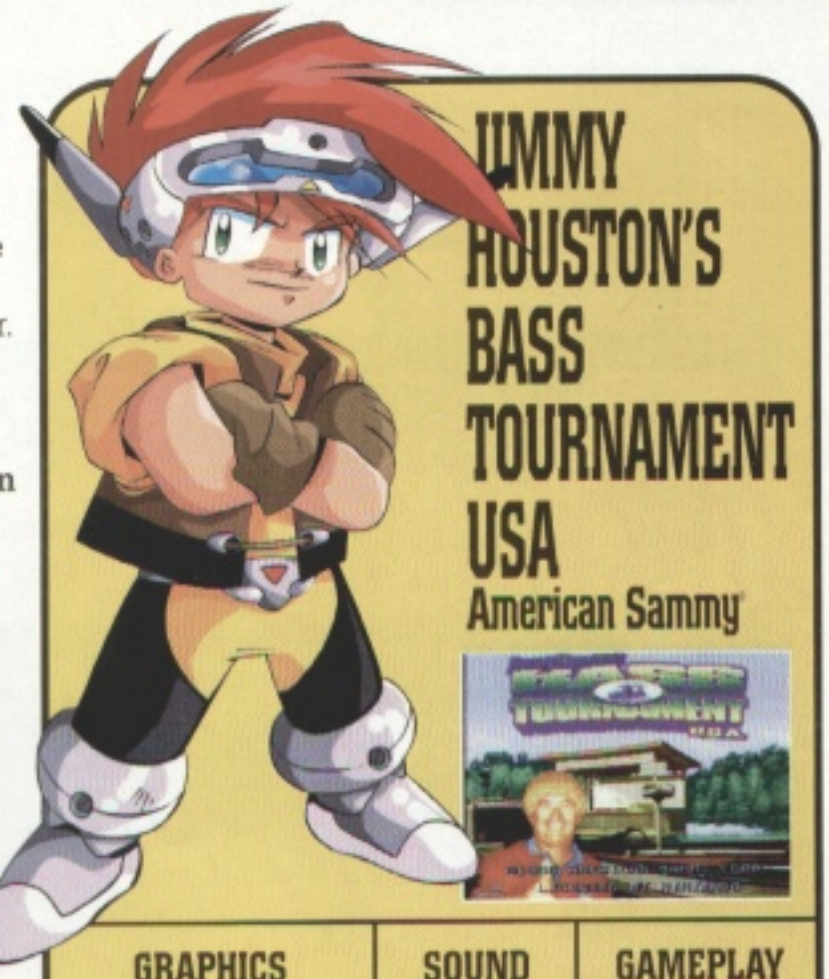
No, no, no. Just what could you be thinking? It's Bass we're after, you hear, Bass!

We didn't have gadgets like depth finders to tell us where the fish were in may day. We used skill and cunning.

other folk who also get paid for it. Jimmy will only give you advice when you're practising and he goes to great lengths to stress the importance of this trial run period. However, even though there are over seven rods and 41 lures, use of the depth finder (it tells you where the fish are) and common sense will generally net you some Bass in no time flat. You obviously wouldn't use a 7ft rod with a 20lb line if you were fishing in the reeds just off the bank.

You may think fishing as a video game is about as ridiculous as it gets, so did I at first, but as with *Bassin's Black Bass* (SP34) it doesn't seem that way once you get into it. It's rather like watching the cricket on a lazy Wednesday afternoon – a passive affair. Good for about half an hour but you'll soon get a bit restless and turn over to Columbo on the other side

● **Wil Overton**



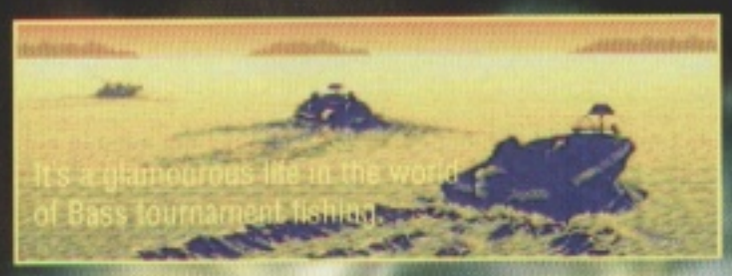
JIMMY HOUSTON'S BASS TOURNAMENT USA

American Sammy

GRAPHICS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
80%	70%	72%
GAMELIFE	OVERALL SCORE:	76%
80%		

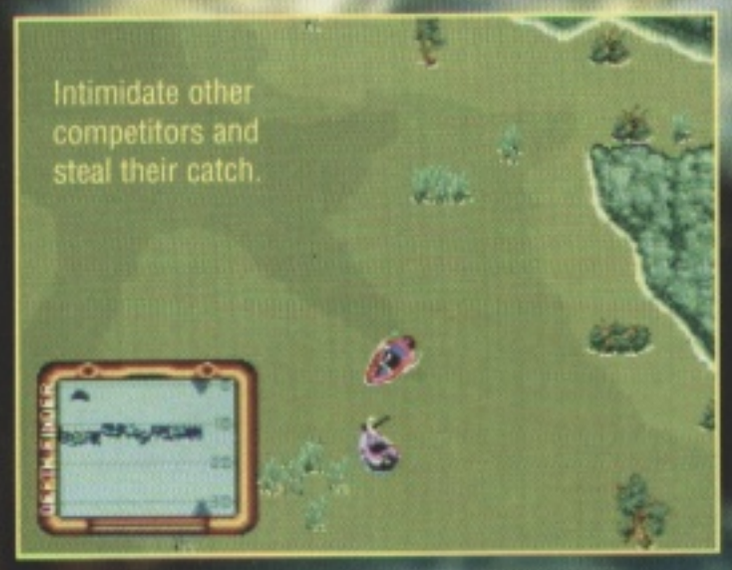
Verdict: Okay, so it's neither action-packed nor particularly revolutionary, but *Bass Tournament USA* does hold some bizarre fascination for those looking for something a bit different to plug into their SNES. There's certainly a lot more to do here than in *Bassin's Black Bass*. *Doom* fanatics, however, need not apply.

PLAYING WITH THE BIG BOYS



Once you've honed your technique and can instinctively detect the perfect spot to snap up that 20lb monster, then you're ready to lock Shimano endorsed Chronarch® reels with other 'pros' in the seven day tournament. The lakes may be the same as those you've practised on, but, this time, ol' Jim won't be there with his advice. Well, you did take notes, didn't you? A ranking within the top three when the day's fishing is over will let you go onto the next stage of the competition and so on and so forth.

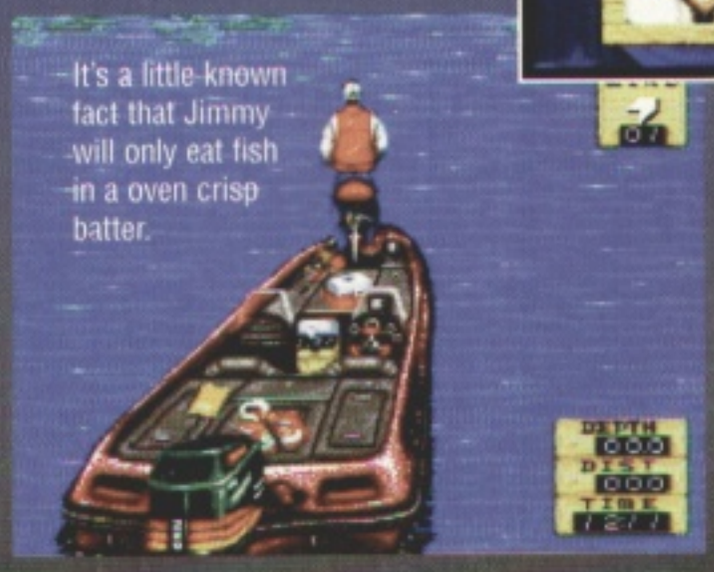
Next the cover of the Angling Times.



Strike! This'll wow 'em at the weigh-in.

Fishing near the bank is fraught with dangers.

Jimbo's advice is invaluable if you're to win the tournament.



BASS TOURNAMENT USA

IZZY'S QUEST FOR THE OLYMPIC RINGS

UK Release

Game: Izzy's Quest for the Olympic Rings
Publisher: US Gold
Developer: In house
Price: Varies (a lot)
Release: Out now
Players: One Player
Cart ROM: 16 Mbits

How refreshing that US Gold have chosen a non-sports title for an Olympic game. How disappointing that it's a mound of dung.

That funny statue thing – it's your restart marker.

It' all very purple and blue.

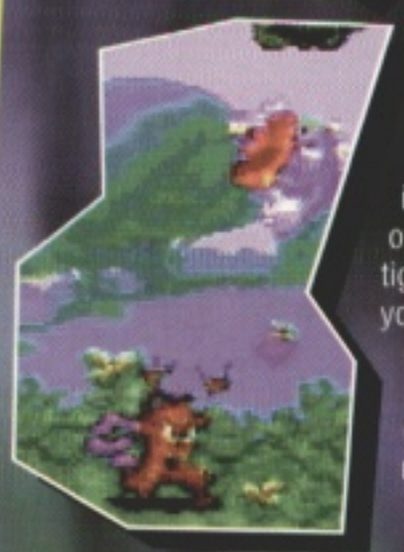
Technology is a strange old thing really. We all play our SNESs and Game Boys without ever having a clue about what goes on under the 'bonnet'. Even when we have a vague idea about the chips inside, we still couldn't ever dream of building one. But then, you look at the technology of yesteryear and you realise how simple it all was. For example, you'd be hard pressed to construct a Nicam digital stereo video recorder of today, but chances are, if you took the cover off a really old radio and employed a bit of very basic reverse engineering, you could probably copy the thing.

The point I'm trying to make is that, as far as I can tell, the people who created this game might be able to copy the videogames of the past, they might be able to deliver something that has been commonplace for the past two years or so, but what they actually know about decent videogame design and cutting edge techniques you could scribble down on the back of a postage stamp. I'll clarify still further. This game looks, and operates (I say 'operates' rather than plays for a

IDIOTIC ENEMIES

The bad guys in the game are a bit thick, frankly. They don't really give any impression that they're aware of your presence and they're also easily avoided (apart from the ones wedged into tight tunnels, a cunning bit of design). Here's a handful of the shameful crew.

A spiky flower (perhaps he's a discus. No, that would be a bit too Olympic-y). Jump over him and laugh as he takes a while to realise what's happened.


The dreaded tiny tree. Looks a bit of a joke, but this is the git who's often placed in tight spaces so you have little option but to lose your energy medallions.

These green snot goblins are dense. When they're approaching you they stop and do nothing, as if they've had second thoughts about killing you.

Again this robot bird enemy doesn't really show any intelligence. He does, however, get in the way a lot and drop eggs which might hit you if you stand underneath him for a laugh.

This Octopus style thing is a harmless fella. He's so slow and ineffective, a simple leap will send you sailing over him to safety.

As thick as the rest, but flamer does seem a bit more of a threat. Perhaps it's just because he's made of fire. I mean, it would be scary, wouldn't it?

There's our Izzy. What an icon, eh?

Strangely reminiscent of many other games...

Er... see the detail on the Ionic columns.

IT'S MORPHIN' TIME

The ever-astonishing Izzy can find icons which enable him to turn into a variety of different forms. Here are four of them...

Flying is a useful talent. By doing so, Izzy can collect a load of bonuses and, of course, get to the end of the level. Odd thing is, though, you can only travel diagonally in one direction.

Ah ha. A fencing Izzy. At last we've found an Olympic connection. Izzy travels along and can "thrust" his way through the enemies. No parrying though..

It's baseball Izzy. The Olympic thing didn't last long, did it? Anyway, the baseball Izzy can bash his way through obstacles which have been specifically placed there for baseball Izzy to bash through.

Not strictly a morph as it doesn't appear temporarily in a level. No, this is one of the bonus levels. You have to 'rocket' you're way upwards avoiding obstacles and enemies.

The Olympic mascot – only slightly more tedious than the Euro '96 David and Baddiel song.

I fear that whenever Izzy appears on my TV, I am going to be very hard pressed not to hawk a heaving great gob at the screen.

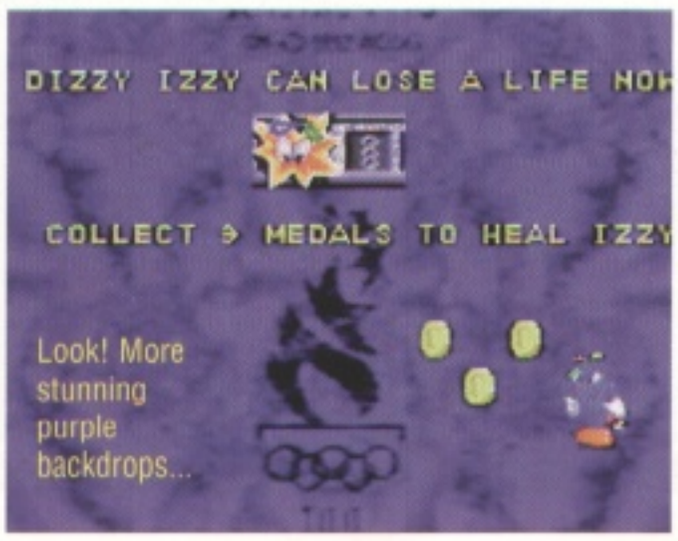
● **Andy Dyer**

good reason) in much the same way as *Cool Spot* did... and the slew of Disney licences that followed for that matter. The main character is animated so well that, in fact, he becomes slightly uncontrollable. Actually, he's not that brilliantly animated, but you know the sort of thing – he takes a while to get up to speed, come to a standstill, or perform a leap. And it leaves the game feeling sluggish and the control spongey. In a Mario title, when you press a button, he responds. Here, you hit a button and go off and make a pot of tea in the hope that by the time you've returned he'll have finished his leap.

Still, games like *Cool Spot* featured enough panache to allow you to largely ignore the shortcomings of the control system. However, this game contains nothing whatsoever to gloss over the fact that it's an age-old concept done badly. Izzy is the Atlanta '96 Olympic Mascot (insert your own "It's a blatantly cynical attempt to cash in on the Olympic bandwagon" phrase here). Apparently, the Olympic flame has gone out, and, to get it back on, you have to recover the five olympic rings. To do this, you need to travel through four worlds avoiding nasties and collecting stuff. Sorry about the lack of detail, but it doesn't warrant any extensive coverage. The game's worst crime of all is not its unoriginality, or lack of interesting features, but the fact that even within the tried and trusted formula, it still manages to be utterly sloppy. It slows down hideously when more than three sprites are on screen, enemies display no intelligence whatsoever, the difficulty level is all over the place, you oh-so-often lose your energy to unseen hazards, and leaps of faith occur so often that if God were playing, even he may begin to doubt his own existence.

I as much as anyone, am looking forward to the Olympic experience, but

What *is* Izzy? Izzy a blue balloon?



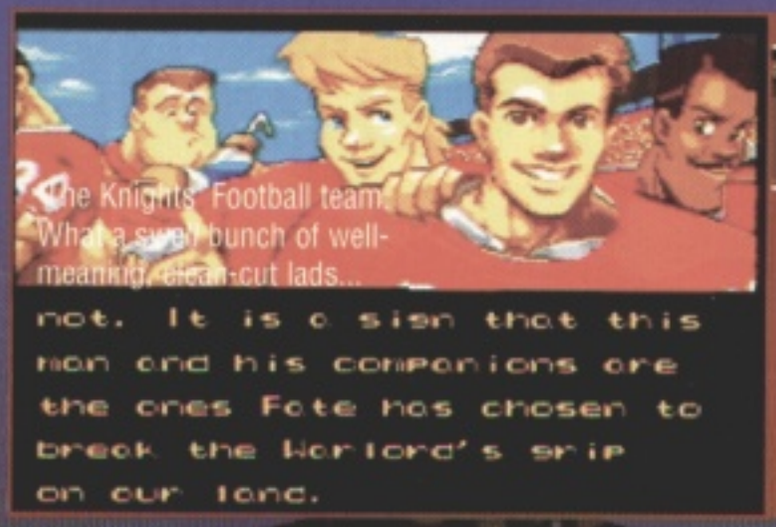
Look! More stunning purple backdrops...

IZZY'S QUEST FOR THE OLYMPIC RINGS

US Gold

GRAPHICS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
70%	62%	20%
GAMELIFE	OVERALL SCORE:	25%
35%		

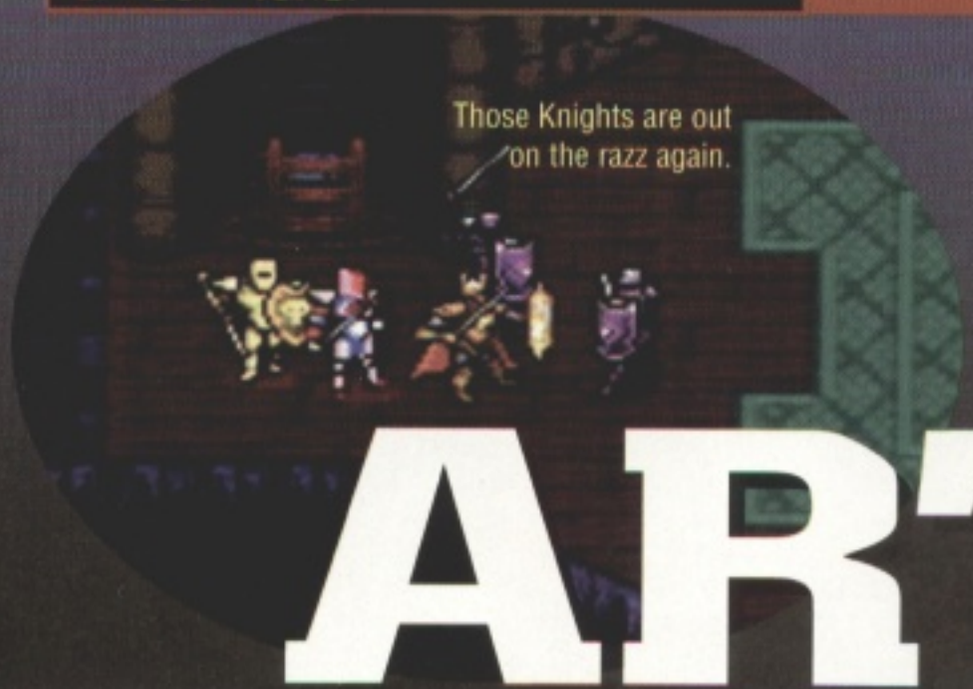
VERDICT: Graphically okay, but this has be done and done and done again. Worse still, I can't ever remember it being done much worse.

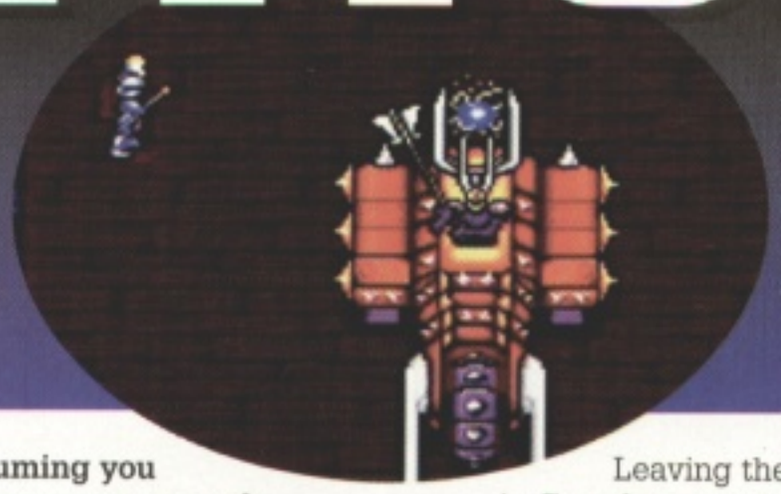

The Knights' Football team. What a swell bunch of well-meaning, clean-cut lads...
not. It is a sign that this man and his companions are the ones Fate has chosen to break the Warlord's grip on our land.

GREAT UK

In case you were unaware, *King Arthur &TKOJ* is a cheap Saturday morning cartoon series with aesthetic qualities that make Hanna-Barbera look like Walt Disney. You play Arthur King, captain of an American Football team ("The Knights", ho ho) whizzed back to legendary Camelot by Merlin when Morgana captures the real King Arthur. It's Arthurian legend exploited by clueless dolts who don't appreciate the

KING ARTHUR




"Dare I waste a swipe of my trusty sword on this?"

Assuming you were canny enough to pick up *Super Play* 45, with its RPG round-up, you'll know that we unofficially gave this game the thumbs down in advance. Enix of America, the company behind *King Arthur*, closed its business and folded for good not so long ago. Why they released this licenced effort rather than translating the latest DragonQuest instalment will remain one of those inscrutable corporate secrets; but this is, in effect, the last SNES game they leave to us. Were we justified in damning it so casually? Or does it have some value for the release-starved RPG-head? It's only fair to let you read the following post mortem and decide for yourselves...

KA&TKOJ plays like an overhead action RPG.

A nice beard and that Merlin chappie.

Leaving the safety of your base in Camelot, you set out to defeat all 12 plot devices (sorry, I mean 'Warlords with vital treasures') by exploring, solving puzzles and fighting dark knights. There are sections with monsters to fight in real-time, and each swipe of your sword depletes your attack bar so that you must wait for it to refill for another full strength strike (a process speeded by blocking with your shield). You also have the back-up of two computer-controlled accomplices, chosen by yourself, although the term 'artificial intelligence' doesn't quite capture the idiocy with which they run off and trap themselves in a cul-de-sac all the time.

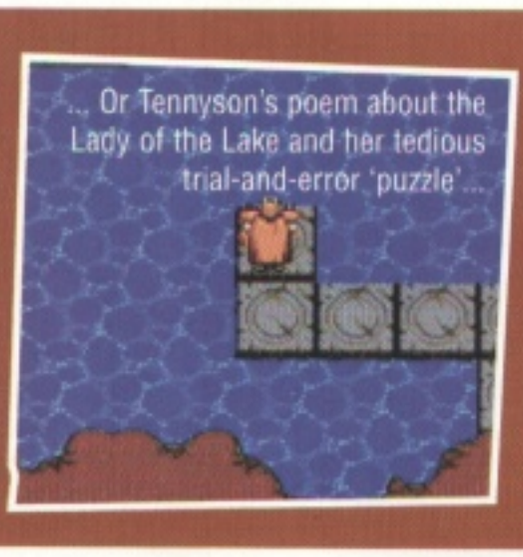
However, you should always be wary of anything that's sold as an RPG but reveals itself to have a password system. King Arthur is rigidly linear: call it quits after completing all but one task in a particular level and the game will make you start all over again, without bothering to record your encounters, your inventory, or the

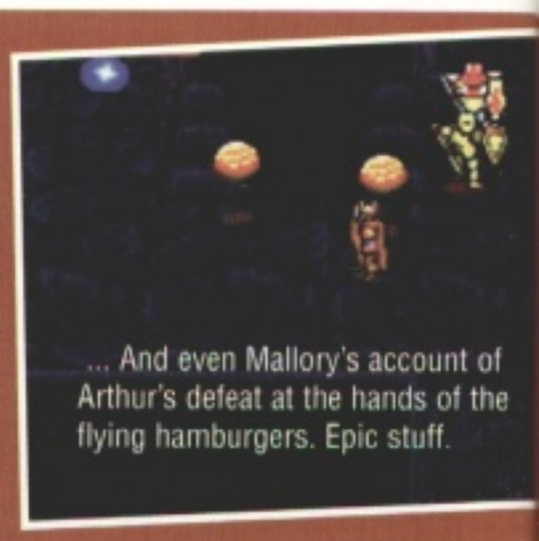
US Import

Game: King Arthur And The Knights Of Justice
Publisher: Enix
Developer: In-house
Price: Check with importer
Release: Out Now
Players: 1
Cart ROM: 16 Mbits

VORPAL BUNNY

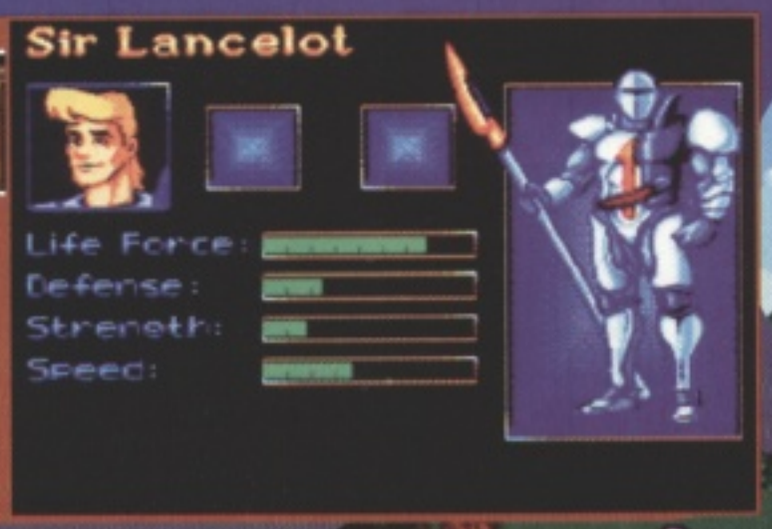
Prepare to be transported to a realm of ancient legend and mystic lore, where all the adventure and excitement of a chivalrous age awaits you. Relive those time-honoured conflicts, if you dare, and face the fury of Morgana as you do battle with each of her vicious Warlords. Shyeah, right.





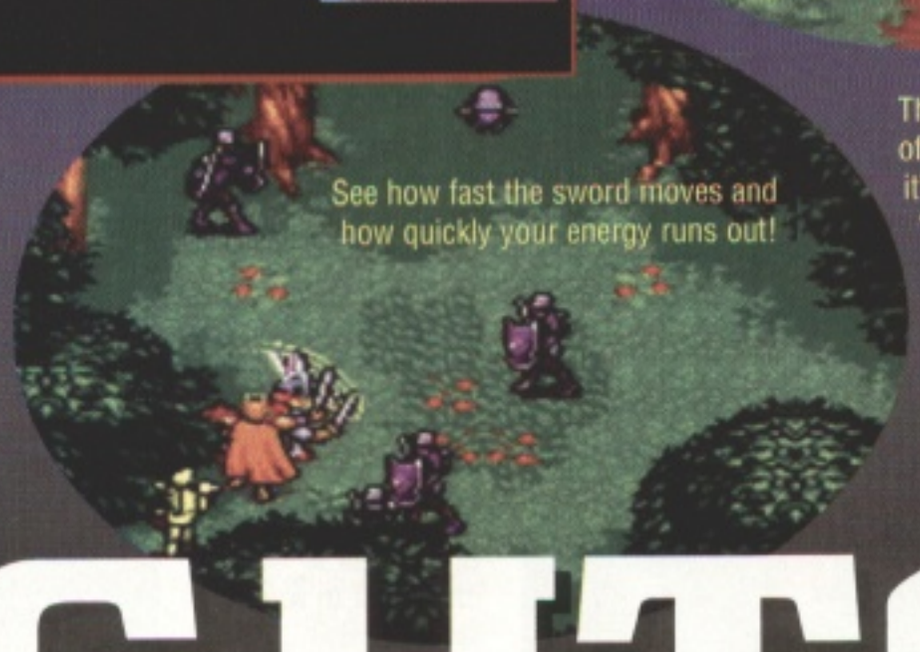
difference between Great Britain and England, or England and Albion, so get a grip on your lunch if you baulk at such things.

But for some reason I've got a bad feeling about this guy. And hey, what's keeping my missus?



The legendary city of CAMELOT! "But it's only a model –" "Sssshh!"

It's that beard again – only this time with a purple rinse.



See how fast the sword moves and how quickly your energy runs out!

AND THE KNIGHTS OF JUSTICE

treasures obtained after hours spent finding and fighting bosses.

Long before encountering this problem, though, you'll notice just how shoddily the game has been constructed. The puzzles are unintelligent, the fighting is a minor setback to your exploration without ever becoming fun in itself, and those of you who value a cracking storyline should be reminded that this is derived from a cheap Saturday morning cartoon series.

Whenever I review a game I always look for the good points as eagerly as the bad – it makes a balanced write-up that much easier – but I'm confounded in this instance because my notes read like a playtester's list of debug errors for the programmers to correct. There are stupidly obvious infinite loops for power-ups and health, graphic corruptions when you check your password on a screen with mist effects, not to mention the unfathomable behaviour of your CPU knights. Whoever designed the terrain graphics obviously wasn't informed that a stack of energy bars were going to be overlaid at the top of the screen, because half the things you're looking for (exits, spell ingredients) are obscured by these clunking green strips. Unless you're looking closely – and not yawning in boredom at the way each location looks practically identical – you may miss these vital objects. It's as if the staff at Enix USA knew the company was going under and couldn't be bothered to put in the effort.

It's not just the game design that's at fault. Without exaggeration, this shouldn't even have met the half-hearted standards of the Nintendo Seal Of Approval. The graphics glitch, the music glitches (something I can't remember encountering before in a SNES game) and there's no sign of extensive playtesting. The programming and fine-tuning processes simply aren't finished, and I'm sure any American gamer with an ounce of chutzpah could demand his money back from NoA as a consequence.

A bad day for gamers, a sad day for Nintendo, and a dismal swansong for Enix of America.

● **Zy Nicholson**

GRAPHICS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
45%	40%	20%
GAMELIFE	OVERALL SCORE:	20%
15%		

Verdict: Just *don't*, okay? If you can play this without constantly thinking of better things to do, your lifestyle really wants working on.

SNES TECH & GAMING ANSWERS

GAMEFREAK

By Tony Mott

And now, the end is near, and I must face the final Gamefreak... Come, for the last time, and bathe your form in the pool of enlightenment...

From Dee, Kidbrooke, London:
Q When the N64 is released over here, do you think Nintendo will alter it in any way to remedy the 50-60Hz problem, i.e. with a switch perhaps?
A No. It'll be 50Hz, just like all their other machines have been.
Q Or will the machine just be so powerful that enough processor power will still be left over for the enhancement of PAL games to the standard of NTSC ones?
A Er, no. Developers of NTSC games will always want to be pushing the N64 to the maximum, yes? So there'll be little left over to compensate for the inadequacies of PAL.
Q From what I've read, Nintendo are thinking of going 'on-line' with the N64. If I were to buy all NTSC American gear (i.e. N64, 64DD, N64 modem(?)), do you think I would still be able to go on-line, or will British gamers lose out, again?
A I don't think Nintendo's networking strategy will hit Europe until at least 1999 (if at all), so yes, you'll lose out.
Q Can you confirm the rumours of *Street Fighter Alpha* getting a SNES release on 64 Mbit cart?
A As was said in *Super Play*'s exclusive preview (which beat the pants off those who believe themselves to be its rivals, ha ha), it's going to be *Street Fighter Alpha 2* that SNES owners are getting, albeit in a lightly tweaked form. And it'll be on a 32 Mbit cart.
Q Did *Super Puyo Puyo* ever get an American release? If so, was it changed in any way for the American market?
A Yes, as *Kirby's Avalanche*, with characters from Kirby's world. It'll be out in the UK in the autumn.
Q By the way, where did Wil get his kawai Bomberman doll (SP43, page 6). Are there any more and how much do they cost?
A I gave it to him. I was given it as a freebie from Hudson Soft. I don't believe they're on sale in the UK, generally.

Here is a pic from the SNES version of *SF Zero 2* (or whatever it ends up being called). Proof indeed that *Super Play* is better than *NMS*.

From Chris Easton, Perth, Scotland:
Q I've been reading text on UK Gold (page 281), and it said that at the E3 all the N64 games were rubbish and *Mario 64* was the best one there, and that was rubbish. Is this true?
A *SM64* was certainly the best one there, but to call it rubbish is tantamount to videogaming heresy. I wouldn't bother with UK Gold any more.
Q What are all the colours the Nintendo 64 joystick will released in?
A Six: grey, red, yellow, green, dark blue and light blue.
Q Sorry about this, but can I have a Super Play Gold, oh mighty King of the Universe? (Grovel, grovel.) There's a crate of Bud in the post if you send me one.
A It's on its way.

Ooh, look – a veritable kaleidoscope o' colour.

From Daniel Hobart, Sevenhampton, Swindon:
Q Is *Tenchi So-zo* and/or better than *Secret Of Mana* and/or *Final Fantasy III*?
A No, but it's probably the best action RPG around, after *Zelda*.
Q How much do you get paid for working on Edge and Digitiser AND *Super Play*?
A Just about enough to support my alcohol and nicotine dependencies.
Q In issue 42 you said you got free games. Lucky sod! How?
A It just happens. Get yourself a job in the videogames industry if you want some too.
Q In issue 26 you gave *Vortex* 90%, and yet it didn't appear in the Top 100. Why?
A Because, looking back, we didn't feel it was quite as hot as we (or rather James) originally thought.
Q What happened to James Leach?
A He's working at Bullfrog. The last I heard was that he was putting together the storyline for the upcoming *Syndicate Wars*.
Q Last time I was in Bath I was strolling away from McDonalds towards the cinema with my friend and I saw a GamesMaster sticker on a window. We looked up and it said 'Future Publishing'. There was a big gold door there. We wanted to go in but we thought you'd kick us out. Would we be allowed to have a look around?
A Well, you'd have to sort out an appointment. But, as *Super Play* isn't going to be around after this ish, we won't be here to greet you.

From someone who uses rose-patterned notepaper and forgot to put their name and address:
Q What happened to *Commanche*?
A Nintendo have taken it off their release schedules, so it must be cancelled.
Q I've heard that Ocean have the PAL rights to *Sim City 2000* and *Chrono Trigger*. Is this true?
A Nope.
Q In issue 33 you said that *Super Metroid 2* was due out by Christmas at least. So where is it?
A Erm, I think we were being rather optimistic. The next *Metroid* game will most

DAYDREAMING

I've seen some good, some bad, and some downright ugly efforts from you people over the last couple of years in this column. Some of you could even have the potential to work in the industry if you don't listen to any teachers who tell you to go into accounting or something crap like that. Bear it in mind.

The first of our last Daydreamers is Jonathan Simpson of Co. Antrim, N. Ireland:

"I was playing a game of *ISSD* recently when I did a fair tackle but was given a red card. I thought the referee must have been bribed, then I thought, wouldn't it great if you were the referee? I came up with the idea of a game called Come On Ref! – you'd be a referee trying to get to the World Cup. You could start off supervising pub football matches or just local ones. You'd get to judge sliding tackles, etc. If you were lucky, you'd get promoted to better leagues as your reputation improved. You could accept bribes to rig big matches, send players off for the littlest reasons, and disallow goals. If you were caught accepting bribes you'd be taken to prison and it'd be game over. If you made the crowds angry you might get chased home and have to get to your car quickly and dodge the angry mob. If you got caught they would beat you to death and it would be GAME OVER."

Beating a referee to death? Hmm. Not even Millwall fans would stoop that low, surely. Anyway, yeah, bit weird but I like it. Sort of. Next up is Martin Harder out of Farnham in Surrey:

"I'd like to see an arcade game called something like Wing Racer! It would be a cross between *Virtua Racing*, *Starwing* and *Wipeout*. The game plot would centre around something like you needing money to move off the dump of a planet you live on.

"To raise this money you take part in a dangerous TV gameshow in which you race Arwing-type crafts around different landscapes and hallways set in the past, present and future, ranging from the dawn of time to rush hour at Clapham Junction to the end of the universe. You get into your craft and realise that if you don't qualify in a race your engine is rigged to simply stop, leaving you either stranded in deep space until your oxygen runs out or you plummet to your bloody end. All the crafts would have catchy number plates such as KI55 A55.

"It would be a massive multi-player game involving anything from one to 15 linked units – maybe even with motion chairs – so you could blast your mates (or, if you haven't got any, complete strangers) to a pile of steaming, quivering pulp."

Some of my mates are already piles of steaming, quivering pulp, so I'm not sure they'd be any point me playing it. I always like dangerous TV show angles, though. Finally we have Stelios Giamatelos, all the way from Athens, Greece:

"I'd love to see an RPG based on The X-Files. You would be the special FBI agent who would have to solve the 20 or more totally different cases. In an RPG style you would collect clues and items and talk with people to gain valuable information. When you find the guilty person, you would chase him to his HQ. There, in a first-person *Doom*-style perspective, you would try to find him and kill him or arrest him. In some cases you would also chase the suspect with a car, helicopter or deltaplane. After all the cases you would try to find the 'key' to them all, which would lead you to the big boss. Car chases, helicopter fights, chases in warehouses, chases on rivers and climbing mountains to gain clues would all be in a day's work for the special FBI agent."

Is it just me, or is The X-Files a pile of old nob? I've never had my intelligence insulted so much by a TV programme in me life (although my mate's bird, Terry, swears by it for some reason). Still, I like RPGs and I like car chases and stuff and this is the last *Super Play* ever, so how can I have a pop? Not a bad effort.

likely be a Nintendo 64 title.

Q When playing *Earthbound* there was talk of *Earthbound 2*. Any news?

A Nintendo have said that *Mother 3* (*Earthbound* was the Western version of *Mother 2*) is in development, but it's not known whether it'll be on the SNES or N64.

Q Are Ocean going to release *Mission: Impossible* on the SNES?

A No.

From Alex Yap, Rusholme, Manchester:

Q What's happened to Luigi? He doesn't appear in *Yoshi's Island* or *Super Mario RPG* and I don't see him on Mario 64.

A There's been a rumour about a SNES platformer starring Luigi for yonks, so maybe he'll come back that way.

Q Which are better, digitised or rendered graphics?

A Uh... depends what you want to achieve. Rendered graphics will never give you the realism afforded by digitised graphics, but they're more flexible (if you're talking real-time rendered, that is).

Q Who are the top three most attractive beat-'em-up babes?

A Dunno, I've never found pixels very horny meself. S'pose that one out of *Final Fight Tough* isn't bad, though...

Q I knew *ROB* was pump before I sent my letter before, but I still don't know what it actually does.

A He worked with a game where your actions on screen would make him pick up and manipulate little spinning top things.

GAMEFREAK'S MOST WANTED

Last month's Most Wanted game, Super Mario 64, isn't in this list any more, because I already have it (obviously). And PilotWings 64 too. No, these are the ones I'm looking forward to most now...

1 *Super Mario Kart* • Nintendo

An update of the ultimate driving game on the ultimate games console. What a trouser-spoilingly exciting prospect. Let's hope Ninty get stacks and stacks (and stacks) of tracks in there.

2 *Starfox 64* • Nintendo

I had my doubts about this one, but the most recent version I've seen looks dead chipper. The cut scenes are excellent, the bosses impressive, and the characterisation pure Nintendo.

3 *Legend of Zelda 64* • Nintendo

Rather worryingly, Nintendo reputedly don't even know quite what format this is going to take (it's the first 64DD game, and, as such, uses new territory), but Shigeru Miyamoto is steering the good ship Zelda, and that'll do for me.

4 *Blast Corps* • Rare

I never really got into Tonka toys when I was but a lad (I was more of a Lego fan meself), but this looks *amaaazing* fun. I don't care much for the prospect of *Killer Instinct* on the N64, but original stuff like this bodes well for Rare.

5 *Doom 64* • Software Creations

It's a big shame that your adversaries in *Doom 64* will be simply scaled sprites (and not rendered with polys, as had always been claimed), but I'm still optimistic about this one.

THE FINAL CURTAIN

So. That's it, then, the last Gamefreak column ever, done and dusted. It's been a larf, and I feel I ought to offer the following...

THANKS TO:

- All the people who've written in over the years, especially the ultra-prolific Andrew Crane and Dickie Melville, and some of the Daydreamers who've obviously spent almost as much time pondering games as I have.
- Adam Loxton, a top geezer who hasn't tired of videogames in 20 years. Whatta player!
- Future Publishing's toilets for being so resilient on mornings-after-nights-before.

SALUTES TO:

Nintendo, Konami and Capcom, for making the best videogames in the world.

GUFFAWS AT:

Those other mags who don't give honest reviews (they know who they are).

V-SIGNS TO:

Thomas Holzer of Wokingham.

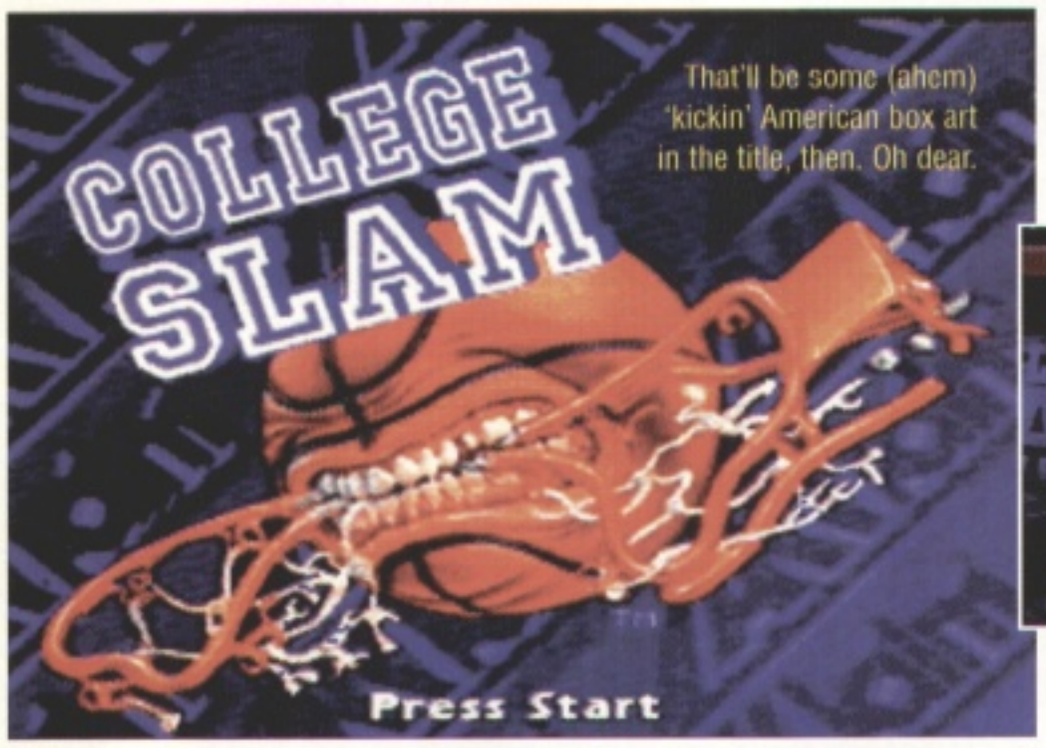
Finally, game-heads, always remember that playing a videogame is like going out with a bird: make a bit of effort to get used to the controls and you'll have it mastered in no time. Or something.

MODE 7

CALLING ALL CHEATS, CRACKERS, AND GAME-FREAKS!

By ZY NICHOLSON

Before you stroll up the Staircase of Scoundrels, take the Corridor of Cads to the Great Hall of Hackmeisters and push the left eye of the Neko statue. The wooden panel that slides away will lead you here, the secret Mode 7 library. As from this month though, send your tips and questions to Total Tactix, Total!, Future Publishing Ltd, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW, or e-mail satkins@futurenet.co.uk. Did I mention the poison needle trap?



Now don't tell me you've seen this lot of freshly shaven tall blokes before.

COLLEGE SLAM

(Acclaim)

SP44:79%

● **Hidden Teams**

Given that *College Slam* is Iguana's latest game in the notorious *NBA Jam* series, what were the odds that it WOULDN'T have some form of cheat to access hidden stuff? Worse than the National Lottery odds, that's what. And, well, whaddya know? On the title screen press up, down, left, right, up, down, left, right. Now start a new game and go to the player selection screen. Nine all-new fraternity teams have been added to the roster. Our thanks go out to Steven Pownall of Leicester for proving a statistical trend.

Incidentally, I've never done the National Lottery. Not ever. I estimate that it leaves me around £70 better off than most of the participants – and boy, I needed the cash. Maybe I should celebrate?

And there they are. The name is some odd American college campus thing.

EARTHWORM JIM 2

(Virgin/Shiny Ent.)

SP40: 82%

● **Reach the secret stage**

● **More special codes**

Although we printed the debug mode and other cheats in SP45, Stelios Giamarelos of Athens has provided some irresistible new codes and game hints. That'll be another tough and challenging game completely ruined for you by the tempting tips and pad-fiddles of Mode Seven, then...

Forked!

You can reach the secret stage – known as 'Get Forked', ahem – via a hidden warp on 'Level Ate'. Start the level and walk to the first continue point. Keep heading right, using Snott to travel across the sticky ceiling, until you see a hill of bologna and a strip of bacon. Stand on the right side of the bacon, jump up and right, then drift down and left under the bacon with your Snott parachute. Walk to the left and you'll be instantly teleported to the secret stage.

Speedy Bomb Service

This code works on the 'Flying King' stage, making the balloon bomb appear right beside your rocket bike. Pause the game, enter X, X, X, X, B, B, B, B and unpause.

Quiz Game Debug

This code is for use on the 'Villi People' and 'Inflated Head' stages. Pause, press A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B and unpause to get 81 mealworms for your quiz and strength bonus games.

One continue

You can only use this once per game. Pause and press A, SELECT, A, B, X, Y, X, Y.

Instant Energy

In need of a top-up? Then pause and press X, SELECT, X, B, X, SELECT, X, A.

Judge Dredd™
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This hidden screen dares to NAME those making pots of cash from tat.

JUSTICE DEPARTMENT
WARNING: HUMOROUS CHEAT MODES PROHIBITED IN ALL PROBE™ GAMES.
JUST SAY NO TO CHEATS._
Oh, you and your witty Humor™.

JUDGE DREDD

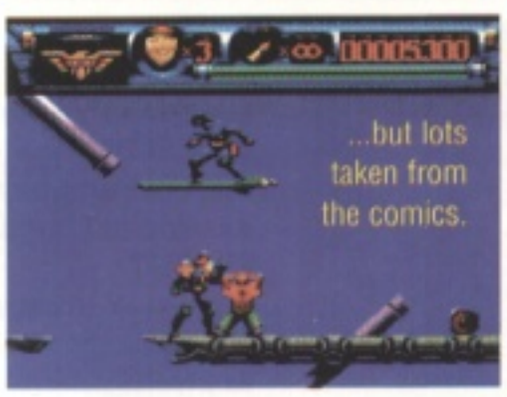
Acclaim

*SP*34: 82%

● **Stage select**
● **Energy Refill**

Drokk! Yet another grudding film licence platformer. There's been some confusion with this 'luxury' code – I've seen other mags print it incompletely – but I've finally discovered how it's supposed to work. Here's my method.

With the game switched on, hit RESET so that it flicks back to the black-&-white text of the copyright info screen. Before this fades away you need to press left, up, X, up, right, Y, thus spelling LUXURY. All directions are performed on the D-Pad, not the collar buttons, and if you enter it correctly then a line of names appears in small green type.



This part of the code calls up an odd message from the Justice Department, claiming that cheats are forbidden, but you've secretly enabled the cheat mode. What you should do now is press A+Y simultaneously, then B+X, to activate the two cheats. A sly reference to Probe boss Fergus McGovern should tell you it's all worked beautifully.

Start a new game and hit SELECT. A menu will appear, allowing you to choose the stage (left or right on the D-Pad) and the map number (up or down on the D-Pad). Once your perp-stiffing activities are under way, you'll notice that your energy bar constantly refills itself after you take any damage. This recharge is unaffected by pausing the game, so if you're having trouble with a particular boss then just press START and wait for a top-up.

YOUNG MERLIN

(Virgin/Westwood

*SP*16:77%

● **Mine Cart routes**

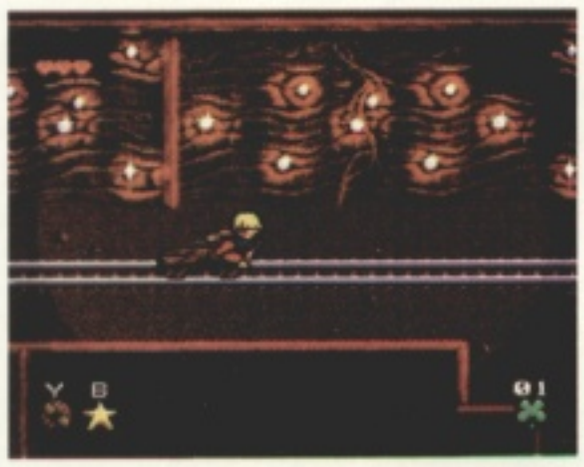
Now, is this a belated blessing or what? This month's 'Patience of a Saint' award goes to Dan Kinnersley of Streatham for cataloguing his way through the tortuous trial-and-error mine cart rides of *Young Merlin*. Dan writes that he saw the comment in SP45's RPG feature and was inspired to help out anybody who felt like giving up. Who am I to stand in his way?

Track 1 – Route to heart
Start heading left
Auto down
Second right
Second down
First right
Long straight
First down
First left
First up
First right
Long straight
First down
First right
Long straight
to Heart

Track 1 – route to exit
Start heading left
Second right
First down
First right
First down
First left
First up
First left
First down
First right
Long straight
Second up

Track 2 – route to exit
Down
Tilt right
Tilt left
Second down
Tilt up
Tilt down
Tilt up
First up
Tilt left
left at top of screen
First left to Spring Bumper
First up
Second down
Third left
Jump

Track 3 – route to heart
Start heading right
Auto down
Second right
First up
Head right at top of room
Turn down on last possible track
Through wall at bottom



Track 3 – route to spider
Start heading right
Turn down
First left
Turn up
Last right
First up
First left
Bounce off ball
Head down
Turn left at bottom of room

Track 3 – from spider to boss
Start heading right
Turn up
Turn left or right (use ball to head down)
Turn left

More firepower

To get the Bubble Gun instantly, pause and press X, X, X, X, A, B, A, SELECT. For the Nuke Gun, try X, X, X, X, A, B, X, SELECT.

Quiz Game Answers

I can't claim to understand any of this.

EWJ2 has a silly game show round with nonsensical questions requiring inappropriate answers; it's all deliberately bizarre, though none too funny; so I'm just going to print Stelios' handy crib sheet and say nothing, okay? You'll soon see what I mean...

Those Q&As

How does Jim spell his first name? MIJ
May I be excused to go to the bathroom? The Industrial Revolution
Do you know thew way to San Jose? Missile Command
What is Doc Duodenum's favourite cheese? Camembert
Can Jim recite The Raven? I don't know
What is the capital of Assyria? Red
What is Princess What's Her Name's real name? What's Her Name
When is Jim's birthday? 1994
What year was the Battle of Hastings? 1066
How many legs has a shark? As many as it wants
How much wood would a woodchuck chuck? Less than A, more than B
Can you rub your stomach and pat your head? No
Phrase your response in the form of a question – Yes
What is the specific gravity of corn on the cob? Marky Mark and the Funky Bunch
Should the Capital Gains Tax be repealed? Yes
What colour is Jim's red gun? Green
Can Jim speak French? No
Can Jim speak German? Bitte, wo ist die toilette?
Can Jim speak Spanish? Si
Can Jim speak Chinese? How's it going?
Can Jim speak Farsi? No
Does Jim's mother approve of his dates? No, she does not
Does Jim have piranha in his aquarium? Both A and B
Can Peter Puppy have a bite of your ice cream sandwich? Over my dead body
In a dogfight between a Spitfire and a Harrier, which plane would win? The Harrier
Cook some meatloaf and I'll boil some potatoes – Why?
What is the capital of South Dakota? Gila Bend, Arizona
What colour is a marshmallow? Carnivorous
How long is a piece of string? The same shape as something beige
Who is the patron saint of video games? Saint Charles "Chip" Butty
How many legs has a katydid? Eleven
How do you compute the area of a circle? Ask your doctor or pharmacist
What is the species name of the duck-billed platypus? St. Petersburg, Florida
Who won the World Cup in 1994? Napoleon
How many TV sets are in the average American household? Orange
An average of 2.8 children – How about if you drain the broth?
Are you being served? Chip Butty
What is a paradox? I don't know
Did you save any room for pie? You've got to be kidding
What is a tarheel? Chip Butty
Who was Charlemagne? Chip Butty
What Broadway musical is based on annelids? Annie
What is the Union Jack? Organised labour's tool for changing a flat tyre
Coal is to water as a lightbulb is to? Wet coal
If cigarettes cause Cancer, what causes Capricorn? One and a half pounds of butter
Will you please knock it off? Yes
Hey kids, what time is it? Nick
Can Jim speak Japanese? Lie

DON'T ASK ALLAN

INVALUABLE MONTHLY GAMING ADVICE

Stuck on a game? Need help with that last boss? Then Ask Zy, before the spiteful old git carries his gaming knowledge to the grave.

May I open this month's tippage with an apology and explanation? I'm still recovering from having my eyeballs popped out, dented, clamped, frozen and lasered in an emergency operation for a detached retina. I can now see again ("phew!" would be the appropriate understatement) but my videogaming is necessarily curtailed, so please don't scream about untested tips or the absence of FF Forum. Normal service, as they say...

Dear Zy,
I'm stuck in the Queen's Castle in Ivor Tower (Gothica) in *Secret of Evermore*. I have made a map of all the tunnels and I have got the key off the old woman but I do not know where to use it. Could you please, please help me?
Ben Hands-Wicks, Chiswick W4
Zy says:
No, please, don't make me do those mazes all over again... You say you've mapped it out but I suspect your schematic is incomplete. The tricky bit is that there are vents to more tunnels hidden in and behind bookcases in the rooms of the upper level. I don't know what you've missed, but I suggest you check all of those castle rooms with an eye for suspicious walls. The key comes into effect later and won't help you here. Look for an old man in a room on the other side of the castle and you can exchange it for an alchemy formula.

Dear Zy,
Help! I'm 37 and my children are laughing at me because I'm having so much trouble with *Super Metroid*. I have the Missiles, Super Missiles, Morphing Ball and Bomb. I can't open any yellow door and there is only one blue door I can't open because it's placed too high (in Brinstar).
Oscar Levcovich, Aarhus, Denmark.
Zy Says:
You can reach that blue door with an 'off the wall' jump, but I wouldn't want your children to grow up traumatised by a nervous wreck of a father, so here's the easy solution...

The next essential item on your acquisitions list is a pair of Hi-Jump Boots, and you'll find them in the currently accessible part of Norfair. Take the lift down from Brinstar and explore beyond the pink door at the bottom left of the Norfair shaft. Use your bombs to get a bit of bounce where needed, and remember that a spinning jump can get through smaller gaps. With these Boots you can reach that high blue door, which leads to – well, I'm not telling you. Heh, heh.

Dear Zy,
I'm completely stuck on Maridia in *Super Metroid*... I can get into Maridia through the entrance from Crateria, and can get to the deepest caverns by way of the long lift between area A and area C, but I can't get anywhere near Draygon, nor the bulk of the area. I think the way through is by using the door in the bottom right of area A, but it's metal and I don't know how to activate it.
D Littlewood, Coventry
Zy says:
Then you still haven't fought the Botwoon, a Maridia mini-boss not mentioned in the manual, as yet? You get a glimpse of the bit you need to get to when travelling on that long lift, but I'm not sure where you're getting stuck as there's nothing else you're missing. Now, there's a cavern high above the broken glass tunnel where you have to make enormous grapple-beam swings to cross to the rightmost exit (it's where you can hitch a grapple-ride upwards on the inflating balloonhead creatures). Have you found the green door on the other side, one room below? Beyond the green door is a large room where you should use the X-ray visor to check around. Look for a blue ceiling door in the top left corner. I suspect you've missed it.

The brown doors are either one-way doors (you need to have opened it from a certain side, like the one you mention) or remain locked until a certain monster or group of monsters is defeated. Defeat Botwoon to progress.

Now look, ZAMN is a GREAT game. Got that?

ZOMBIES ATE MY NEIGBOURS

(Konami/LucasArts)
SP12: 89%

● Special codes
These codes were posted by the inspired (and possibly Game Genie-owning) 'cj377', and give you access to the game's stages with various numbers of victims to rescue. How do they differ from codes we've printed before? Well, the game is over if all your neighbours succumb to the machinations of darkness. Lost victims can be replaced through the accumulation of points but if you already have the full ten, you'll get an extra life instead – quite handy if you wish to take on Dr. Tongue. Conversely, if you're looking for a challenge, try going through the complete game with only one or two victims to rescue on each level.

1 Victim
Level 5 WHRB
Level 9 CBGX
Level 13 XFCK

SYNDICATE

(Ocean/Bullfrog)
SP26: 80%

The lack of vowels hasn't stopped more of that awful 'k3wl t3xt' creeping in.

The globe. Not as imperially pink as it was in Mr Compton's colonial days.

● Harder Game Passwords
You say it's too easy? I'm afraid you're right. So the following codes start you on the later missions with just one agent and no money (although waiting a bit on the briefing menus will bring in enough taxes for some cybernetic modifications).

ROBOTS
Start in Indonesia, with your next mission in Western Australia
C00LB0DY
Start in Paraguay, with your next mission in Uruguay
FL1GHT
Start in W. Australia, with your next mission in New South Wales or the Northern Territories
BCHHLL
Start in Kenya, with your next mission in Zaire or Mozambique

Confused by the lack of vowels on the password screen? Make sure you use the numbers 1 (one) and 0 (zero) for O and I when entering the codes.

Delicious displays of amorality.

IZZY'S QUEST FOR THE OLYMPIC RINGS

(US Gold)
SP47: 25%

● Stage select
I wonder if cyberspace holds a virtual rest home for old and retired video game 'mascots'? Imagine, a wrinkled yellow Pac Man stuffing platefuls of cherries in the corner; Sony's Polygon Man asking himself where he went wrong; a ruddy-cheeked Dizzy suddenly waking up in his armchair to yell obscenities and chuck whisky bottles at the telly? If so, they'd better reserve another bed.

Begin a new game and press START to pause the action. On the D-Pad you need to enter left, down, down, left, right and down. Reset the machine, make for the options menu and you should see an all-new Stage Select ready to use before starting a new game.

And that's it, apparently.

Level 17	BKYZ
Level 25	XLYZ
Level 33	WJQK
Level 41	BRPK

2 Victims

Level 5	SHRG
Level 9	FBGZ
Level 13	YFCT
Level 27	RKYL
Level 21	PXBG
Level 25	YYLL
Level 29	XLZD
Level 33	SJQT
Level 37	BZVG
Level 41	RRPT
Level 45	PLHZ

9 Victims

Level 5	THRL
Level 9	GBGF
Level 13	LFCP
Level 17	DKYR
Level 33	TJQP
Level 37	DZVS
Level 41	DRPP

10 Victims

Level 5	XHRS
Level 9	WBGR
Level 13	GFCY
Level 17	KKYM
Level 21	BXBS
Level 25	GYLM
Level 29	GLZQ
Level 33	XJQY
Level 37	KZVJ
Level 41	KRPY
Level 45	BLHR

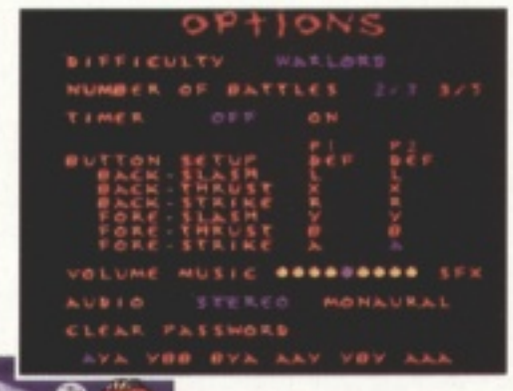
Special Codes

Code	Bonus Stage
XDSJ	Curse of the Pharoahs
BCDF	Day of the Tentacle
XWJR	Monsters Among Us
TDSS	Play all the bonus levels

'Monsters Among Us' is a special credit level where the LucasArts developers introduce themselves. Don't peek until you've finished the whole game, okay?

WEAPONLORD

(Ocean/Namco)
*SP*36: 75%



Don't change your buttons here just yet.

● **Play as Zark in story mode**

Mike 'Lemmy' Thorpe of Notts dropped me a postcard asking for this code, but then sent it in himself a week later. See how his perseverance has made him a more competent fighter, a famed Mode 7 tipster and, generally, a happier human being?

Um, here endeth the lesson. Reset the game, go to the options menu, enter your password as AYA YBB BYA AAY YBY AAA and press START to hear (hopefully) the righteous KER-CHANG!! of victory. Now you can start a Story Mode game and 'be' the Weaponlord boss and Demon Lord Zarak as he tries to change the prophecy.

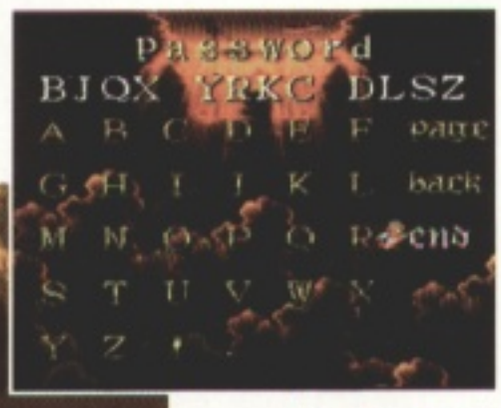
This cheat won't work if you change any game options other than the difficulty setting and the time limit while entering the password. Should you wish to customise your button configuration, you'll just have wait till the game is underway and press L+R+Start+Select on the stage map screen.

ACTRAISER 2

(Enix)
*SP*16: 69%

● **Play the demo intro**

I've been told this works on American carts, and, so far, I have only been able to prove that it definitely doesn't work on our Japanese version, but let's see. Set the difficulty level to Hard, then enter the password...



... hackneyed play.

BJQX YRKC DLSZ

This supposedly gives you two chances to fight a demon rider and the large skeletal dragon that manifests itself in the sunset-bathed clouds of the game's attract sequence. Let me know how you get on.

SUPER METROID

(Nintendo
*SP*20: 92%

● **Those missiles – at last**

My request for advice on obtaining five missiles above the glass tunnel in Maridia (SP45) yielded a splendid response from *Super Play* readers cleverer than myself, so I'm prompted to reveal the technique for anyone who, like me, couldn't fathom it (*Not that many, surely?* – Ed) (*Oi!* – Zy). Credits for speediest response to Simon Butler of Devon, but with thanks to Andrew McGrae, Phil Halliwell, ANT, David Burrows, Alex Reavy, John Healy and Thomas Wreford.

Breaking through to the missiles is a straightforward matter of dashing directly underneath them and launching yourself upwards. To build up enough speed for a high-powered rocket launch you need to open all the doors in the adjacent rooms to the right, clearing them of orange crawlies to provide a clear dashing space. If you simply run straight through, however – and this was my mistake – you'll slip off the raised rock and decelerate. The trick is to pull down and charge for your launch before, or exactly as, you pass through the last blue door. If you cut it fine enough, you'll have the time in 'powered-up' mode to jaunt over to the leftmost clump of seaweed and hit jump. Don't expect to do it on your first, or indeed your tenth, attempt: it requires pixel-perfect placement. Okay, so it's only worth five missiles, but the principle of 100-per-centing a game is dear to us.

COMPTON'S MOST WANTED

Mr Compton desires your cheats so badly, that he's going to hold his breath until you agree to send them in.

"Yo, whassup?" – as my nephew said to me recently. Couldn't understand a bally word he was saying, of course, but I surmise it is some felicitous greeting that you young people exchange nowadays. Having gained your youthful confidence thus, here is a resumé of my most lusted-after cheats:

1) Super Mario RPG. The likelihood of Square including cheatage is small, admittedly, but this very rarity places *SMRPG* at the apex of my Most Wanted Cheats list.

2) Magical Drop. Shapes... Stars... Triangles... Head spinning.... Need... Cheat...

3) Civilisation. This US import is the essential choice for any true strategy fan, but – by the bumfluff on Jevon's chin! – they've disabled all the old computer cheats in Koei's conversion. Are you the first in the world to discover alternatives?

FAREWELL MODE 7!

What with *Super Play* coming to a close and all that, you may be wondering about the fate of our wonderful tipsmeister Zy. Well, *Super Play* does have a heart and has ensured that Zy doesn't go hungry by bribing Total! into giving him a job. So from now on, for the best tips in the land, buy Total! magazine and turn to the Total Tactix game advice pages!

THE COMPLETE LINK INVENTORY

Definitively, the guide to every item ever in Zelda III: A Link To The Past.

ZELDA

Why such an old game, you might wonder (perhaps cynically)? The truth is that, in four years of Super Play, we've never stopped getting letters and questions about this classic adventure. Our guide in SP3-4 sold out pronto, and yet it didn't even touch on some of the material in these pages. This is intended as a list of teasers and oddities for completists, not a walkthrough for struggling newcomers, although you may find much of the following information helpful if you're stuck. Read closely and even the old Zelda pros among you may spot a few techniques you didn't know.

He's All Heart

Link's life energy is measured in hearts, with a potential maximum of 20 heart containers. He starts with three, finds a fourth in Sanctuary and earns another ten by defeating the bosses of all the dungeons. The six remaining must be collected quarter by quarter from the following locations. I've listed them in the order you're likely to find them.

(1) The cave in the NW of Kakariko Village. Fall into the well from the ledge above and bomb the cracked wall near the chests.

(2) In the cellar of Blind's hideout, a low thatched building in northern Kakariko Village. The cracked wall above the chests can be bombed open.

(3) In southern Kakariko is the house of the quarrelling brothers: bomb through the wall and exit for the Fifteen Second Race. You don't need Pegasus Boots to win the heart – just look for two dots on the ground below the central signpost and push down to jump over the fence here.

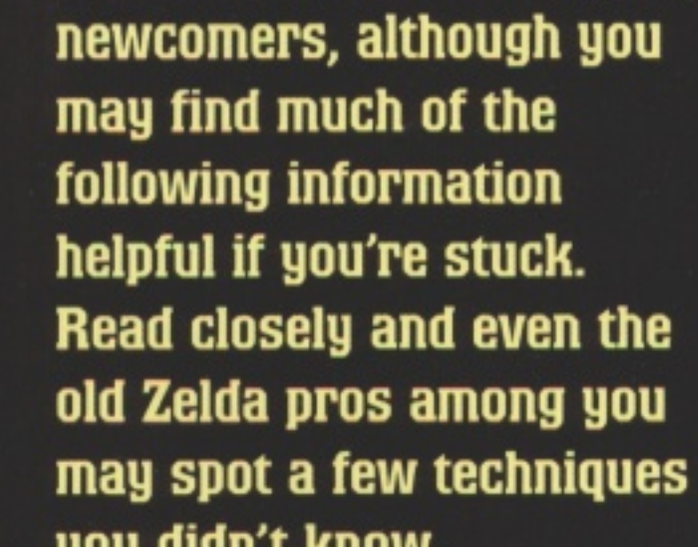
(4) Just west of Sanctuary is a ledge with a pile of green rocks. Dash into the rocks to break them, revealing stairs that lead down.

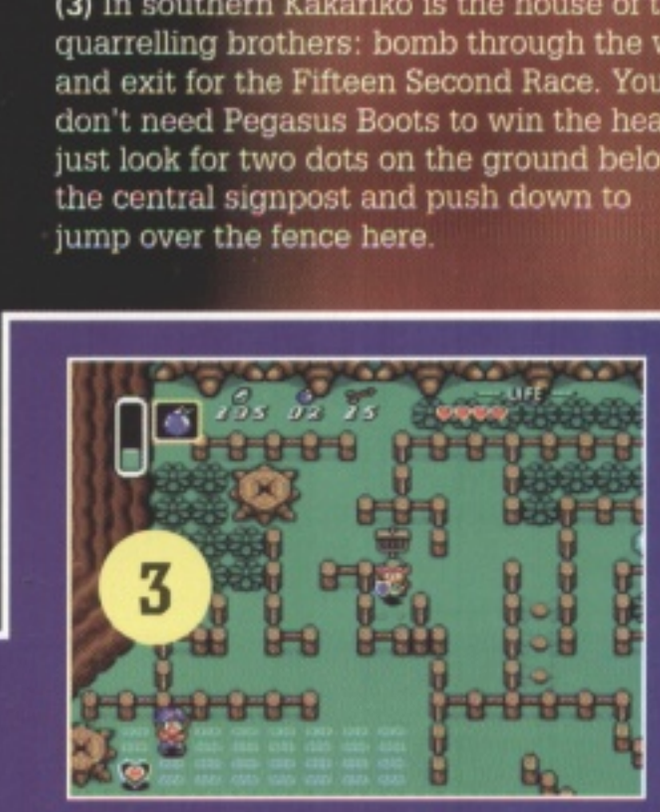
(5) In the NE corner of the desert is a cave entrance. Talk to Sahasrahla inside and search the southern wall for a cracked section to bomb.

(6) To find the Boss with the third pendant you need to leave the Desert Palace by the western exit and lift some rocks around a nearby cave mouth. Just south of this western exit – staying on the ledge above the sands – is a heart piece guarded by a vulture.

(7) After purchasing Zora's Flippers, swim south (falling down one waterfall) and then west into the shallows for the fenced-in heart piece you saw earlier.

(8) Death Mountain. When you first warp to the Dark World you should walk to the diamond where the bully is kicking the ball guy and use the Mirror to reach the higher ledge of 'Spectacle Rock' in the Light World.





A heart piece is waiting for you there.

(9) Jump off the cliff edge at the gap below the cave mouth in Spectacle Rock. You'll land on a ledge with another cave. Collect your heart and talk to Sahasrahla.

(10) A dark hole in a tree stump marks the entrance to the thieves' hideout in the Lost Woods, but look north of it for a square of nine bushes. A hole underneath the middle bush drops you next to a heart piece.

(11) Just left of the entrance to the Swamp Ruins (Light World). Enter the second room inside, pull the right-hand lever to open the sluice and step back outside to see a heart piece in the mud.

(12) The Dark World's Golden Pyramid. When Agahnim first warps you to its summit, head down two flights of stairs and look on the right-hand ledge.

(13) After defeating Agahnim for the first time, return to the tree near the Lost Woods that the lumberjack Bumpkin Brothers were last seen sawing through. Dash it and jump in.

Second Race, and can found in the same place. It may take a few attempts (and a fortune in Rupees) but one of the prizes you can randomly shovel up is a heart piece.

(16) And how about the Chest Game? A creature in the Village of Outcasts (Kakariko's dark underbelly) will charge you for opening two of 16 chests. Again, it may take several lucky draws before you win a heart piece, but that's why poor people aren't welcome...

(17) East of the Skull Woods in the Dark World you'll see a sign promising a piece of heart to the one who wears the cape. The cave beyond is blocked by a large round pinball bumper, but you can use the Magic Cape's power to walk straight through it.

(18) Lake Hylia, Dark World. Look for a circle of stones in the north-west of the lake and stand in the shallows to use the Mirror. In the Light World this is a small island with a heart piece.

(19) After beating Blind's dungeon and claiming the Titan's Mitt, go to the Dark World's equivalent of the Smithy and pull up the large stones. Pound all the purple stakes into the ground and the tree-trunk will vanish, revealing a staircase.

(20) North of the Dark World's Cemetery is a pointless-looking ladder leading up to an empty ledge. But use your Magic Mirror to warp back and you'll be standing before a cave entrance. Bomb the end of the cave for a heart piece.

(21) The Dark World's Misery Mire – what would be the desert in the LW – has an alcove in its north-east corner. Use your Mirror here to warp up to a ledge with a liftable square rock. Down the stairs is a block-pushing puzzle with a heart piece to win.

(22) There's a heart piece in the north-west corner of Misery Mire, too. Step into the mouth of the westernmost 'head' and push the blocks to reach both chests.

(23) Head west of Turtle Rock (Dark World) and lift the first big square stone you see. Head down the stairs and continue walking straight up. To the left there are treasures to collect with the hookshot, but they can wait.

Although it looks like a sheer drop, the north section of this walkway is merely invisible: use your Ether Magic to reveal its crafty turns. Cross over and bomb your way through all the walls. When you next reappear outside, you'll be on an island hanging in the sky. Don't jump off, but use the Mirror to warp to the Light World and collect your heart piece. Crafty or what?

(24) At one point during the Turtle Rock dungeon you have to cross to the Big Chest via an outside ledge. Before re-entering, use the Mirror on the right of this ledge and enter the cave you see in the Light World. Shoot all the Goriyas and the door to the last heart piece will open. Ta da!

GUIDE

(14) A high cave south of the Haunted Grove. Look for a circle of purple flowers in the Dark World and use the Mirror at the centre to re-appear on a ledge in the Light World. You can now enter the cave.

(15) Ready for the Digging Game? This is the Dark World's answer to the Fifteen

EVERY ITEM EVER

Once again these are listed in the most likely order of discovery...

Lamp

The brightness of a room increases with the number of braziers burning, and light can often illuminate adjacent rooms. Many puzzles require you to light all the braziers.

Blue Boomerang

Found in a chest in the dungeon of Hyrule Castle. Flies over low walls and barriers. Use it to stun enemies, hit switches or collect distant coins and keys. Bats and skeletons can be harmed by a boomerang hit.

Bombs

Get these as soon as possible from the chests below Kakariko's well. Once you've found one, more will turn up. Whenever you see a suspicious-looking wall or cracked floor, test it. A bomb will also trigger any switches caught in the radius of its blast.

Bug-Catching Net

The sick boy in Kakariko Village will lend out his Bug Net for catching fairies and bees. Oddly enough, the slow sweep of the Net will deflect Agahnim's magic as effectively as the Master Sword...

So why are the rocks octagonal?

Shield and boomerang suitably upgraded.

My things are like a shield of steel!

You've got to look close for some bombable bits.

Pegasus Boots

Received from Sahasrahla after fetching the first pendant. Try dashing into rockpiles, statues and trees to see what treasures are shaken out. If a cracked wall looks particularly weak, save your bombs and dash it instead. The strength of your dash attack increases with each grade of sword.

Book of Mudora

This sits on a shelf in the southern Kakariko library, and you must dash the bookcase to dislodge it. Every time you encounter the ancient Hylian language – at the Desert Palace entrance, or on ancient Hylian monoliths – equip the Book to translate it.

Power Glove

This is in the Big Treasure Chest (marked red on your map) in the Desert Palace, and you need it to reach the sandworm bosses. You can lift light rocks and throw bombs with the Glove.

Magic Mushroom

A thorough search around the centre of the Lost Woods will reveal this jolly dancing fungus. You can actually collect this many times over, but it serves no purpose beyond creating...

Magic Powder

Give the Mushroom to the Witch in NE Hyrule and check back later. You'll find a bag of Magic Powder just inside her hut. Sprinkling the Magic Powder on small enemies will often transform them, although we're a bit dubious about the Buzz Blob's alter-ego: Mr Potatohead, or dodgy racial stereotype?

Zora's Flippers

You'll need 500 Rupees to buy this item from Zora, who lives in the very north-western corner of Hyrule, in the Light World. Head north from the Waterfall of Wishing, following the maze of shallows until you reach Zora's Falls at the top right. The flippers let you swim in deep water, and you can speed up your stroke by pressing A repeatedly. You can also use the whirlpools to warp back and forth at these locations:
W of Witch's Hut – N of Great Swamp
Lake Hylia – S of the Waterfall
SE of Lost Woods – E of Lake Hylia

Red Boomerang

This is given to you in exchange for the Blue Boomerang by the fairy behind the Waterfall of Wishing. It has a superior range of effect, and, if you run around after throwing it, you can guide it to strike your pursuers.

Red Shield

Exchange your normal shield for this upgrade at the Waterfall of Wishing, or buy it for 500 Rupees from the shop just west of the Golden Pyramid (you'll need to go around the moat). It offers added protection against the fireballs emitted by fishmen and face tiles.

Ice Rod

East of Lake Hylia, guarded by crabs, is the Ice Cave (home of the Good Bee, see Bestiary). Look closely to the left of the mouth of the Ice Cave and you'll see a rock covering a hole in the wall. Blast it with a bomb to reach the chest. The Ice Rod freezes enemies at the cost of your Magic Power.

Magic Mirror

Given to you by the Old Man of Death Mountain. Warps you from Dark to Light World, leaving a wormhole open for your return until used again.

Moon Pearl

Found in the Big Treasure Chest of the Tower of Hera. The trick to reaching the chest is to trigger or reset the star tiles which change the layout of the floor. When you've set it up correctly, you can drop down from a hole in the floor above and land right in front of the chest. The Moon Pearl lets you travel around the Dark World without turning into a harmless, hopeless fluffy bunny (a manifestation of Link's true character, worryingly).

Magic Cape

In the top right of the Dark World's Cemetery you'll see a fenced-off rockpile. Pull up a bush to get in, warp with the Mirror and dash the gravestone to reveal a staircase. Alternatively, use the Titan's Mitt in the Light World to lift the dark stones. The Cape makes Link both invisible and invulnerable, though it drains Magic Power rapidly, and it's best saved for emergencies and special operations.

Ether Medallion

With the Master Sword and the Book of Mudora, take the rope bridge west of the Tower of Hera. Read the Hylian Monolith and receive a new magical power. The lightning flash of Ether Magic stuns/freezes enemies and reveals invisible floors, and is effective against numbers of airborne creatures (the Cemeteries, for instance).

Magic Hammer

This awaits discovery in the Big Treasure

Chest of the Dark Palace, the first dungeon of the Dark World. Race across the crumbling bridge on floor 1F (top left) and take the left-hand door. Negotiate the dark maze of fire-breathing lizards and find a cracked right-hand wall to bomb.

The Hammer is used to flatten posts and barriers, but it's also the only weapon effective against certain types of monster (see the Bestiary). It can smash away the armour of the Dark Palace's Helmasaur boss.

Cane of Byrna

Zip to the Dark World using the warp tile near Spectacle Rock, drop off a ledge to the south and enter the cave. Pound the barriers with the Hammer and use your Magic Cape to cross the spikes. If you don't have the Cape, fill your bottles with life potion. The Cane generates a forcefield to harm Link's attackers.

The Shovel

The boy in the Dark World's Haunted Grove will give you this. You can use it almost anywhere outside, where it randomly uncovers coins and small treasures (rather like slashing grass or pulling bushes). However, its only real purpose is in locating...

The Flute

Once you have the Shovel, use the Mirror to zip to the Haunted Grove in the Light World and dig around in the top left corner to find the Flute. The boy will let you keep it if you return it to him, but you'll have to lose the Shovel. Stand in front of the Rooster weather vane in Kakariko Square and play the Flute to summon some nifty avian transport.

Quake Medallion

Find this in the top right corner of the Dark World, roughly the equivalent location of Zora's Falls. The sign warns of a curse on whoever throws something in the circle of stones so, of course, you just have to find out... Grab a nearby bush, rock, skull, maybe the signpost itself – whatever you throw, a mad catfish will appear and give you the Medallion to get rid of you. If you throw anything else after this, he'll either shoot you or you'll see a skeletal fish leaping.

The Quake Magic will grant access to certain dungeons, and you'll see its symbol indicated where its use is appropriate. It lacks offensive power but it can mass-transform a screenful of enemies as if you had sprinkled Magic Powder on all of them.

Hookshot

Found in the Big Treasure Chest of the Dark World's Water Palace, the Hookshot gives Link the ability to cross chasms when there's a solid object to hook on the other side. It can stun enemies that the Boomerang cannot, and instantly destroys enemies like the Onoffs and Pengators of the Ice Palace. A bizarre side-effect of the Hookshot is that it renders Link completely invulnerable to damage while extending and contracting. This is of especial value when fighting Ganon, as you can use the Hookshot to reduce damage from his circle of fiery bats.

Fire Rod

This powerful weapon resides in the Big Treasure Chest of the Skull Woods dungeon. Until you find this item, you won't be able to open the dungeon's insect-headed main entrance. Useful for killing Gibdos and lighting braziers from a distance, essential for making Ganon visible.

Titan's Mitt

Found in the Big Treasure Chest of Blind's Dungeon in the Village of Outcasts, this level 2 Power Glove gives Link the strength to lift dark heavy rocks.

An ether magic revelation.

Above: the Cane of Byrna deters Chomps.

Odd Quake effects.

Blue Mail

Look for this in the Big Treasure Chest of the Ice Palace. To reach it you'll need to bomb through the floor above and drop down. The Blue Mail reduces the amount of damage taken from an enemy attack by 50%.

Bombos Medallion

The Misery Mire in the Dark World is completely isolated, but just outside its eastern border (where you would enter the desert in the Light World) is an area marked by purple stakes. Standing within the stakes, use the Mirror to reach the monolith's ledge in the Light World. Bombos Magic is purely offensive, and it's actually a great convenience in the later dungeons when you need to destroy (a) all the monsters in the room to open a door, or (b) the wizards who teleport in and out.

Cane of Somaria

Found in the Big Treasure Chest of Misery Mire dungeon, the Cane uses your Magic Power to create a solid orange block out of thin air. This block can be lifted, pushed or thrown on switches, although you can only ever have one in existence. Use the Cane a second time (regardless of where you're standing) and the block will disperse in a burst of energy, fragments of which can harm other creatures. You'll also need the Cane to create moving platforms on the question marks in Turtle Rock.

Big Bomb

You can only buy this at the Bomb Shop (the Dark World location of Link's House) after Misery Mire dungeon is completed. Drag it to the first ledge of the Golden Pyramid – no dashing, now – and detonate it beside the cracked brown wall on the first ledge. Inside is the pond of the Fat Fairy.

Silver Bow

You need Silver Arrows to defeat Ganon in his final throes, so upgrade your wooden bow by luzzing it in the Fat Fairy's pond in the Golden Pyramid.

Above: the trick to defeating Goriyas.

Mirror Shield

Contained in the Big Treasure Chest of Turtle Rock, the Mirror Shield offers additional protection against the beam weapons fired by eyeball guardians. A useful tip for using this and other shields is to charge up your sword and keep it charged: the Shield will then offer complete protection on one side, so you can move freely around a room while keeping your Shield towards the enemy.

Red Mail

Found in the Big Treasure Chest of Ganon's Tower, the Red Mail reduces the amount of damage taken from an enemy attack by 75%. Sometimes this will result in negligible fractional damage, explaining why Link can appear to be hurt without actually losing hearts.

SECRETS OF HYRULE

So, you noticed those cracked walls in the Hyrule Castle dungeon before you had bombs or boots? You can get back down there and collect your 300 Rupees by pushing the top left headstone in the cemetery (you'll need Power Gloves).

On your first trip to Kakariko you'll have noticed a kid who always runs away from you. An amusing sight, sure, but with the Pegasus Shoes equipped you can actually catch up and have a chat. Also, the woman sweeping her path nearby has good reason to trust you. Sprinkle her with Magic Powder before she disappears from the game.

Without a doubt, the fastest sure-fire money spinner is the treasure cave under the large rock at the winding desert entrance. Pop in, empty all ten jars for 50 rupees, pop out and pop back in again to see all the jars refilled. However, it's worth checking out the chest games in the Village of Outcasts and south of Kakariko as both boast very favourable odds.

Wading up to the river's source to see Zora and buy his flippers? Avoid the fishmen and their projectiles by repeatedly jumping in the deep water. You won't take damage from the dip but you will become temporarily invulnerable.

By pulling on certain objects – like the claw of Turtle Rock, or a portrait on the wall of a house in Kakariko – you can uncover a small fortune in rupees.

Until you find the flute, the sneaky way to get from one side of the world to the other pronto is to quit your game and restart. Link's House, Sanctuary, or Death Mountain?

The Mysterious Pond sits in a cave at the centre of Lake Hylia. Throw in a hundred rupees, bit by bit, and a Fairy will grant you the capacity to carry more bombs or arrows. Repeated 50 rupee donations will increase your load further until you have the maximum of 50 Bombs and 70 Arrows.

Running a bit low on magic in the middle of a dungeon? Freeze an enemy with the Ice Rod and then break them apart with the Hammer. This almost always leaves a magic vial, often a full one for a complete recharge.

If you see a big urn in a dungeon, the chances are you'll find fairies inside. See if there's a ledge or a hole in the floor above it and drop down.

Magic items will take a heavy toll on your meter, so it's essential that you double its capacity as soon as you have the Magic Powder and the Hammer. Pound the posts outside the Smithy in the Light World and jump down the well. The room behind the crack in the north wall contains a strange green altar, and if you sprinkle it with Powder you'll disturb the sleep of the Mad Batter. Agree to be cursed, because his bumbling efforts to inhibit your magic will actually halve the amount drained by any item.

Equipped with the Titan's Mitt, head south of the Village of Outcasts and look for a small frog trapped by dark heavy rocks just left of the Shooting Gallery. This is actually the blacksmith's brother in his Dark World form, and if you lead him back to the Smithy in the Light World you can ask for a favour (see Link's Sword). This is also a fine time to collect the fourth Magic Bottle.

LINK'S SWORD

All of the swords above grade 1 have a special long range attack when your heart meter is full.

- **Inherited Sword (grade 1).** Given to you by your uncle in the secret passage to Hyrule Castle.
- **Master Sword (grade 2).** Found in a clearing at the top of the Lost Woods. Can only be removed if you have all three pendants.
- **Reforged Sword (grade 3).** Once you've returned the blacksmith's brother to the smithy, ask them to temper your sword. It doesn't actually take too long but this is a fine time to get in some archery practice.
- **Golden Sword (grade 4).** Throw the Reforged Sword into the Fat Fairy's pond in the Golden Pyramid.

CHAT! with magic-powdered Buzz Blobs.

FLY! with the power of a small duck.

BLUSH! in shame as you try to fob off a fairy with cheap goods.

SNEEZE! at the Mad Batter's curse.

The Waterfall of Wishing is essential for upgrading your items. If you're having trouble finding it, use the whirlpool in Lake Hylia. Swim up to the next waterfall and walk *into* it to find a hidden cave. When prompted, you should chuck in your Boomerang and your Shield. You can also throw in an empty Bottle for a free dose of green potion.

Chris Houlihan's room does indeed exist, although it's a highly unlikely random occurrence. Damien Couch of NSW, Australia reports that you can increase the chance of finding it by using the 'Nike Zelda' and 'walk through walls' AR codes printed in SP14 (7E00 5E16 and 7E00 5EFF). Enter a dungeon or house and keep walking down and right, skipping through the various locations of the game.

MAGIC BOTTLES

Bottles can hold potions, fairies or bees, and there are four to collect. Here's how to get all of them.

(1) Bought from the Bottle Seller in Kakariko Square, predictably enough, for 100 Rupees.

(2) Enter the back room of Kakariko Tavern by walking straight down from the sick boy's house. The treasure chest contains a bottle.

(3) The third bottle belongs to a man who camps under Hyrule Castle bridge. Jump in Lake Hylia and swim north, taking the channel upstream, then pass under the bridge and wake the happy camper.

(4) A sign warns you not to speak to the mysterious middle-aged man at the edge of the desert, but hints from other thieves should tell you he was once a gang member. He will help you get the fourth bottle if you promise not to tell anyone.

When you have rescued the blacksmith's brother, zip to the Dark World's ruinous equivalent of the Smithy. There you will find a silver treasure chest that you cannot open. Drag it outside, warp with the Mirror, then take it to the man in the desert and encourage him to rekindle his lockpicking

THE HYRULE BESTIARY

What follows is merely a sampler of the most interesting flora and fauna found in the multifarious environments of Link's world...

The Good Bee

If you catch a bee with your Bug Net, then store it away, it will attack all enemies on screen when released from the bottle. A special instance is the Good Bee, which appears when you dash the statue in the Ice Cave east of Lake Hylia. This bee can be taken into dungeons and dutifully hangs around for a while to be recaptured once it has cleaned up. If you release it near the Bottle Seller in Kakariko Village, he'll pay you 100 Rupees for it.

Horders

You'll occasionally disturb one of these when lifting a rock or bush. Don't kill it – just chase around after it to collect all the coins it drops. The sooner you grab the coin, the sooner another one appears.

Fish!

By operating the sluice in the Swamp Ruins entrance (see Heart piece 11) you'll also deprive a fish of its *lebensraum*. Leave the Swamp Ruins to see it flapping around in the mud. You can carry it to the water to the north and throw it in, where it will reward you with 20 rupees, or you can try to take it all the way back to Kakariko and trade it for money and goods at the Bottle Seller's pitch.

Rabbit!

Slash the grass in the Great Swamp to flush it out. If you can catch it (by talking to it) when it jumps up, you'll be able to demand its treasure.

Turtles

The only way to hurt these heavily-armoured foes is to flip them on their backs with the Hammer, when they become susceptible to your sword. Another hit with the Hammer might do it, but you risk flipping them back up.

Chooks

Resilient animals, those chickens. Whack one with a sword and it squawks in discomfort, but is otherwise unharmed. So whack it again. And again. And if you keep hacking away for long enough, a dozen vigilante Chooks will descend from the skies to peck your little head from its shoulders. We've warned you, but we bet you're going to try it anyway...

Goriyas

Only arrows can destroy the giant rats. The trick to dealing with dangerous red Goriyas is to shoot left or right of them and move quickly so they step into the arrow's path.

Anti-Fairies

These are the small pale skulls with rotating red bobbles that bounce around dungeons. They will SAVE YOUR LIFE. Give one a quick sprinkle of Magic Powder and it will transform into a real Fairy, restoring your heart meter on the spot.

Pikit

Inhabiting forests and swamps, the Pikit parts its carapace to reveal a tongue that can steal your bombs, rupees, even your shield. Treat it with caution – you can often recover your shield by defeating it, but occasionally you will find the shield disappears or is thrown to an unreachable place.

Dark World Trees

Some trees object to being dashed and will drop a bomb if you disturb them. You can talk to them afterwards, but you shouldn't trust everything they say...

WARP TILE LOCATIONS

After you defeat Agahnim you can zip to the Dark World by entering Hyrule Castle, but these Warp Tiles make it easier to get to particular spots. Most are hidden under rocks.

Spectacle Rock. The first Warp Tile you'll find is at the summit of Death Mountain.

Lost Woods. You'll need the Titan's Mitt, or at least the Hammer and a short detour through the Woods, to reach it from Kakariko Village.

Desert ledge. Summon the Bird with your flute and take destination 6, the very SW corner of Hyrule. You'll need Titan's Mitts.

NW corner of Great Swamp. From Link's House, head down a screen and then left. You'll need the Hammer to reach it.

South of Eastern Palace. Look for a circle of posts beside a cave entrance and use the Hammer. The Bird will drop you off right next to it (destination 5).

Turtle Rock. Make this appear by pounding the posts in correct order.

Island of Lake Hylia. Used purely to enter the Ice Palace. You'll need the Titan's Mitt.

Take the fish to the pool (above) or trade him for 'stuff' at the bottle seller's pitch (below).

Vegetable villainy! Fingered by a furtive flowering felon!

The mid-dungeon health top-up miracle.

Ain't nobody here but us chickens.

That's no good, you've got to haggle.

Link has clearly been sniffing the magic powder.

FINAL FANTASY FORUM

Welcome back to the column that thinks it's an RPG evil arch-enemy. Just when you think they might be gone for good, they rise again more powerful than before..

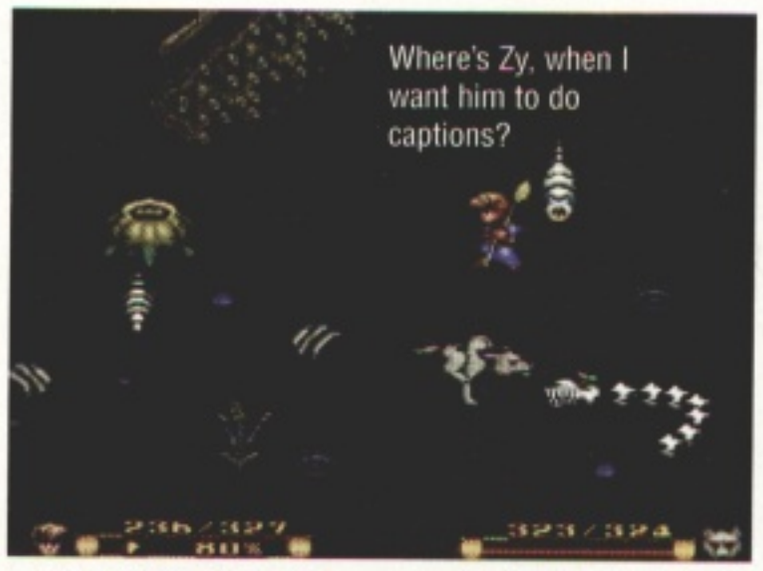
"I'm stuck on *Secret Of Mana 2*. I don't know what to do on the Ghost Ship and I'm really stuck." – G. Morgan, S. Wales.
"On *Seiken Densetsu 3* I have become well and truly stuck because of the Japanese text. My party consists of Duran, Riesz and Angela. I have come to a town where I have met Neko and lots of soldiers who won't talk to me..." – Daniel Howden, Somerset.

Yes, we'd all like to be able to play *Final Fantasy V*, *Dragon Quest VI*, *Seiken Densetsu 3*, *Romancing Sa•Ga* series, *Tactics Ogre* and *Tales of Phantasia*. With translations now seemingly out of the question, some of you have bought these Japanese games on import or, like Edward Tothill of Surrey, are entertaining the possibility. The letters we've received might suggest a trend, so we'd like to stress the line *Super Play* takes.

Our advice is that you refrain from buying complex or text-heavy Japanese imports if you can't read them. When the games are playable for a non-Japanese speaker, like the original *Front Mission*, we make a point of saying so. This is a Forum, so we are prepared to raise common questions in the vague hope that somebody else can help: if you can solve the problems of the readers mentioned above, we'd like you to write in. But please don't expect us to run player's guides to help you cope with the text (import sales of these games are very rare and a full professional translation is too expensive to justify). When Japanese-fluent contributors in early issues of *Super Play* raved about an untranslated *Breath of Fire* it encouraged some unfortunate British readers to buy expensive carts that were effectively unplayable, so we've learnt to be exceptionally cautious in our recommendations.

Just A Tiny Problem

Evermore has its sticking points, and I've had requests from Jean Muncer, Paul Scobey and others to help out with finding



the rocket components.

The wheel and the gauge are both located in Prehistoria. Return to Fire Eyes' village and travel through Bugmuck's maze to fight a tougher version of the very first insect boss. Then make your way back to where you first discovered the Levitate formula. Instead of finding an active volcano, you'll be able to reach a pot with the missing part.

To reach the final pyramid area in Antiqua you need to teleport in. You'll find the warp point within a cave you can reach

THE ZEAL SEAL DEAL

A few people questioned the powerful equipment shown in previous *Chrono Trigger* screenshots for the Forum, so we're happy to include this list of magically sealed goodies and how they might be obtained. Your thanks should be directed towards H. R. Keen of Birmingham, its effervescent compiler.

Following the storyline in 12,000 BC,

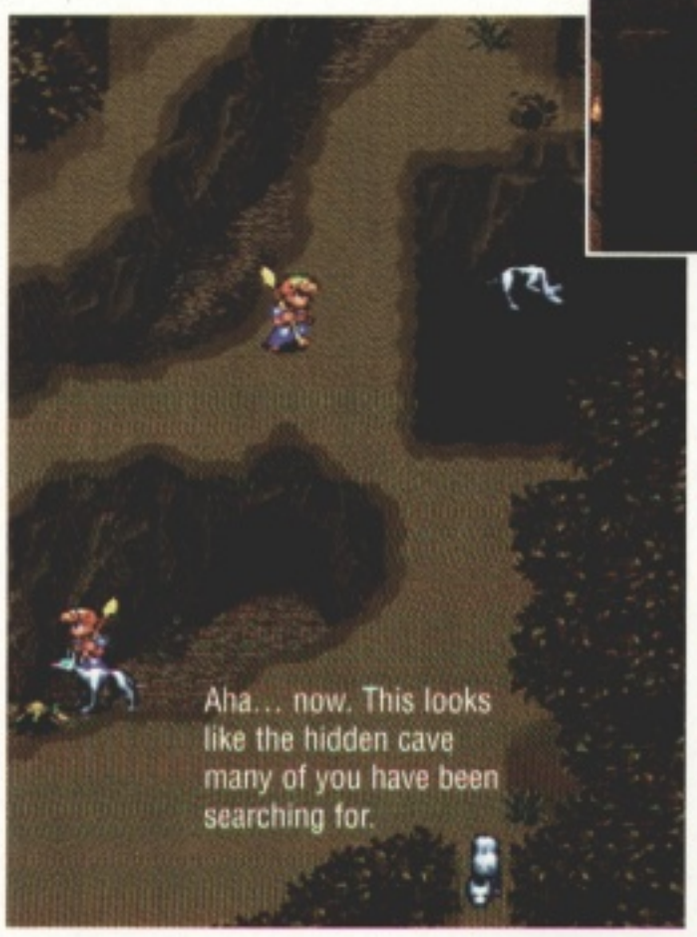
Oh well, I'll do these captions myself. Er, some stats. Ollie, can you find him? I need help...

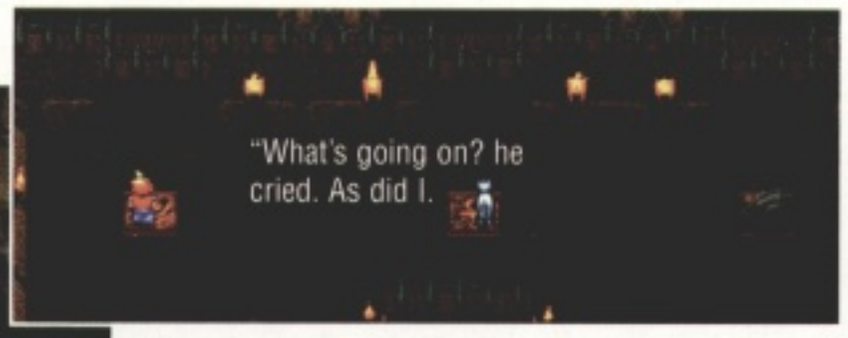
you'll soon reach a scene in which the Mammon Machine charges up Marle's pendant. After this event it will be as effective as Schala's pendant for opening those magically sealed doors and chests that have been puzzling you since the start of the game. Attentive players might argue that Marle's pendant and Schala's are one and the same, but anyway...

The pendant shimmers...!
Ahem. Yes, the bit in the Mammon machine where you get the power to use the pendant for opening secret things.

The Super Play 'Temporal Treasure Tracker' Table

LOCATED	ERA	CONTAINS
Aris Dome	2300 AD	Elixir, Hit Ring, GoldErng, Power Tab, Lumin Robe
Bangor Dome	2300 AD	Full Ether, Charm Top, Wallet
Keeper's Dome	2300 AD	Epoch's launch pad
Trann Dome	2300 AD	Gold Stud, Full Ether, Magic Tab
Forest Ruins	1000 AD	Safe Helm or Swallow (recommend Swallow)
Guardia Castle	1000 AD	Red Vest
Guardia Forest	1000 AD	Speed Tab
Heckran Cave	1000 AD	Dash Ring, Wall Ring

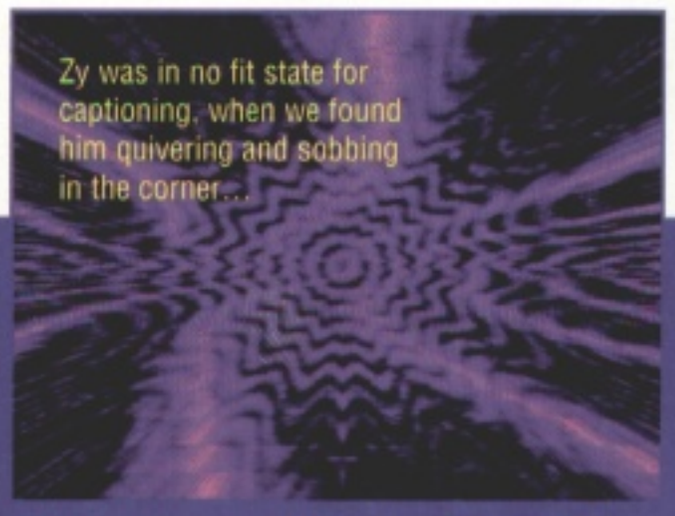




Opening the central gate of the pyramid's main junction room requires you to trigger all three floor switches in the room simultaneously. First, you'll need a mud pepper to work your Levitate alchemy on the stone: this secures the right-hand switch. Now change over to controlling your pooch and place him on the central switch. Finally, flip control back to the kid and move him to the left switch – carefully now, or you'll have the hound lapping at your heels again. Tiny awaits you.

Tiny himself is an unusual boss, and an impatient player may not discover how to beat him. Similarly, the diehard might not work out just what it was they did right. Essentially, you will only ever fight or avoid Tiny's minions. The key to his defeat is to simply step back into the teleport you came out of. Do this repeatedly and you'll find yourself going around and around, exhausting Tiny as he tries to throw monsters your way. Eventually he'll give up and the Diamond Eyes will be yours. Onwards, and upwards, to Omnitopia!

in the river bed surrounding the western pyramid (head into the river bed by going across and south from Horace's camp. You may have seen the cave entrance in the water on previous visits, but it's only accessible when the river has dried up).



Hero's Grave	1000 AD	Kali Blade, Nova Armour, Siren
Mayor's Hse, Porre	1000 AD	Black Vest, White Vest
Truce Inn	1000 AD	Blue Vest
Guardia Castle	600 AD	Red Mail
Guardia Forest	600 AD	Power Ring
Truce Inn	600 AD	Blue Mail
Elder's Hse, Porre	600 AD	Black Mail, White Mail
Magic Cave	600 AD	Magic Ring
Hero's Grave	600 AD	Moon Armour, Shiva Edge, Valkyre
Zeal Palace	12,000 BC	Queen Zeal

Before you jump into the Epoch and start jaunting around the time-space continuum in search of treasures, it might be worth repeating the hint we gave away when we reported on Square's Dream Project (SP32 – feeling silly you missed it, now?). Have you thought about the problems of time travel and the duplication of matter? If you find a treasure chest and open it, the chest will still be empty when you check it again in the future. But if you open it in the future, then zip back through time to the past, the same chest won't yet have been opened – so you can nab its contents all over again... Indeed, opening the chests in reverse temporal order can actually get you better items. You'll find this effective when zipping between 1000AD and 600AD. Does fantasy armour really have a sell-by date?

Davy Stephens suggest that the powering up only occurs if you've checked the earlier chest beforehand but chosen not to open it. We're not sure that's correct, but see how you get on.

We hope he gets over his grief at *Super Play* closing, after all, he's doing tips for *Total* next month. Cheap plug.

FF FORUM INDEX

We're constantly asked for information that's already been printed in the Forum, and we're happy to oblige. However, as it's not fair on our regular readers to reprint old material, we've compiled a brief index telling you when we covered the most commonly raised problems. Just check our Back Issues page for details on ordering the magazine you're missing.

Issue	FF Forum covered...
SP30	Zozo clock puzzle, save Shadow from Floating Continent
SP31	Air Anchor location, Mog's Water Rondo revealed
SP32	Play as Kappa, Colosseum wager list, Economizer
SP33	Eblan Ruins treasure (FFII), Gogo secrets, money-laden monsters
SP34	Save Cid, beat Intangir, Umaro
SP35	Odin & Raiden, Strago's Lores, Hidon, 8 Dragon locations
SP36	Gestahl's Banquet, Shadow's Dreams, FFII/III Steal lists
SP37	Fanatic's Tower tactics, Magimaster, alternative Blitzes
SP38	Returner treasures, Gau's Rages, Desperation Attacks
SP39	Dream Team ending (CT), Setzer's gear, all Esper locations
SP40	Magus' gear (CT), Moogle trickery, Triple Tech Rock locations (CT)
SP41	Moon Stone stolen (CT), Ragnarok list, Relm glitch, Son of Sun (CT)
SP42	Celes & S. Figaro secrets, Locke/ Moogle party trickery explained
SP43	Best armour/weapons, FFIII end sequence revealed in full
SP44	Nobilia market (SoE), Relic Ring, Ayla Charm list (CT)
SP45	Dark Forest (SoE), maze technique, Bike Race Prizes (CT), Frog's endings (CT), saving and recovering Shadow again (definitive)

ANYONE? ANYONE?

Michael Robertshaw of York asks "if *Chrono Trigger* glitches at all when using an adaptor." We're unable to answer this at *SPlay* because, after *FF3*, nobody was willing to risk their save point by using anything other than a US SNES... Any adaptor recommendations or warnings, folks? Same goes for US *Super Mario RPG*.

Special thanks to Amanda Attia ("the L & R buttons will only change the perspective in the bike race when you choose Mode 2 – without boost" on *Chrono Trigger*") and Spekkio.

IN LOVING MEMORY

We've saved the saddest part until last. As you surely know by now, this is the last time that you will ever have the fortune to read *Super Play*, because its life has been cruelly cut short. But fear not, *Super Play* lives on in the spirit of its editorial team – past and present. To mark its passing we've dug up a few of *Super Play*'s star players* who wished to give their views on what is without doubt one of the finest gaming magazines ever to grace the world's newsstands. (I'm not getting too gooey or over-the-top here, am I? – Ed)

As is customary on occasions like this, we felt that there was nothing like some self-congratulatory back-slapping – not to mention some tears, some fond memories and a great deal of reminiscing of times gone by... As for me, I'm not going to say a word, I'm going to leave it to those *Super Play* old-hands we all know and love. Farewell *Super Play*, you will be missed by many!

* If you can't find the *Super Play* you were looking for, some were unavailable for comment, too choked to speak, or had to be kept

Matt Bielby — Launch Editor, Super Play. Went on to edit SFX and currently working on a secret project

"Kinda Japanese looking." That was, more or less, the be-all and end-all of my inspiration for *Super Play*, way back in the summer of '92, when the idea of launching a Super Nintendo-dedicated games mag was first mooted here at Future Publishing. It turned out to be more than enough, though, with *Super Play* (even the name was intended to sound a little odd and somehow "foreign") swiftly becoming the best-selling magazine of its type, beating off a raft of similar titles launched at around the same time.

The reasons for that success? They were many, but chief amongst them, I suspect, was the fact that it was easily the best-written games magazine of the time (something I'd largely put down to then-staff writer Jonathan Davies), far-and-away the most distinctive looking (cheers, art people Traci, Lisa and Jez!), and – most of all – turned out to be ludicrously clued-up about the actual machine, and the games that were coming out for it. The other magazines would write all sorts of ill-informed rubbish about the SNES and its games; *Super Play*, on the other hand, would (almost) invariably get it completely right. Thank Jason Brooks – now editor of *Edge* magazine, but then fresh off the streets of Manchester – for that. He arrived at the magazine with a Japanese Super Famicom (the SNES having only just been officially launched in the UK at the time), and a love of video games that bowed to no man. I thought he was probably quite bonkers; I also knew he was our ace-in-the-hole, and so he turned out to be.

Needless to say, I loved working as editor of *Super Play* for that first year or so, and still love it today. While other console magazines get more and more interchangable, *Super Play* has retained its distinctive identity (originally inspired by a handful of incredibly pricey Japanese games mags, picked up at London's Japan Centre), its friendly feel, and its spot-on games coverage. That the magazine's time has now been and gone, then, I find quite tragic. I'll miss its funny-looking logo (just what was that blob by the "p" all about anyway? I, for one, can't remember), its brilliant anime-style covers (by the great Wil Overton – hurrah!), that little slab of Japanese text on the front (it reads "Super Pray", if I remember aright), even Kris and bloody Tel...

Super Play, I salute you. If the Nintendo 64 ever gets a dedicated magazine as good as you, it'll be a happy day indeed...

Jonathan Davies, ex-staff writer of Super Play, promoted to dep ed, then left to become ed of the ill-fated Sega Zone. And then Amiga Power . . . And now editor of top PC magazine PC Gamer. And we'll let you judge for yourselves what that's done to him, as his mind takes a little trip back in time . . .

(...crackle crackle...)
You can't kill Neko! Everybody loves him!
"He has become an anachronism, and must be terminated."
No! What do you know, with your suits and your spreadsheets?
"Step away from the tiger, please."
No. I won't. You'll have to kill me first.
"Step away from the tiger, please."
Noooooooo...
(...crackle crackle...)
"Where on Earth are we going to put all these Super Nintendo games? There just isn't room."
We could try squeezing some reviews in around the margins.
"Or how about covermounting some microfilm containing all the games we can't fit into the magazine?"
There's nothing else for it. We're going to have to add on yet more pages...
(...crackle crackle...)
Urgh! Get away from me you horrible tramp! No! Get off!
(Er, hang on... crackle crackle...)
"...That's another fine issue completed then. Now what?"
Mario Kart?
"Hurrah!"
Hurrah!
"Swallow my red homing shell, you blackheart!"
Ah, but I shall skillfully manoeuvre behind this wall and...
"Aaarghhh! Again you have got the better of me..."
(...crackle crackle...)
"...and this is Jason."
Hello.
"Hello. PAL and SCART."
What?
"Mode 7. Jet out of the Gladiators."
Er.
(...crackle crackle... Blackness)

Wil Overton, ex designer of Super Play — and dab-hand at reviewing and just about anything, come to that — is now listening to his strange CDs over on GamesMaster magazine. But what did he have to say on discovering the distressing news . . .

Think of the best job that someone who had a Super Famicom, a weakness for import RPGs, an ridiculously large collection of Japanese gaming and anime mags, and just happened to be getting a bit of a name for himself drawing wide-eyed girls in battle armour, could possibly hope for. You can probably guess, then, how I happy I was to receive a phone call from a certain Matt Bielby way back in '92 asking me to create a cover image for his new Super Nintendo magazine, and then a bit later on, by Lisa and James, to come and join the team proper. To be honest, I never thought they'd ask me back for issue two let alone another 46 of the things!

When I sit back and think of all the really great games mags – Crash, Zzap 64, PCG, Mean Machines – it's easy to see why *Super Play* will be so fondly remembered. It not only liked the games it talked about (and, gasp, actually played them after work) but thanks to some of the best games journos around (yes that's you Tony, Jason, Jonathan and Zy) it knew a bit about them too. There was never that false gushing over whatever 'exclusive' you'd bagged for your lead game that plagues a certain 'official' title or a reliance on that week's batch of press releases that was the mainstay of Super Gamer, Control, N-Force and all those others now long forgotten. Any gamer sick of western-centric mags which merely passed off any Japanese title other than Street Fighter as 'bonkers Jap stuff' could be sure that even the most obscure horse racing sim would get a fair crack of the whip (even if we thought it was a bit 'bonkers' ourselves). I've also still to see any other UK games mag, on any system, credit the link from Japanese culture through anime and manga into their games as accurately as *Super Play* did.

Yes, I'm sad and just a bit teary-eyed that Splay's time has come, and, even though I'll do my damnedest to see that a bit of it lives on in GamesMaster's forthcoming Nintendo supplements, it won't be quite the same. Thanks *Super Play*, it was fun.

Oh, and if anyone from NMS is reading – you can't mark a Japanese import of *Seiken Densetsu 3* down just because it's full of text YOU can't read. And it's GOEMON.

Thank you and oyasumi-nasai.

Zy, ex dep ed, and star freelancer was almost too upset to talk, but we coaxed him into revealing the following . . .

I think we actually scared other magazine teams – even our own publishers – when they found out just how much we loved our video games.

On the outside *Super Play* might have been a giggling, saucer-eyed, purple-haired cutie in a school dress, but lurking underneath was a rapacious trivia-devouring demon with fact-sucking tentacles that gorged themselves on every SNES-related incident from here to Akihibara. Nintendo gaming wasn't just a job for us, nor simply a hobby, but a way of life. And that, I'm sure, is why you're still reading a 16-bit console mag in the Summer of '96.

It was gratifying that we managed to maintain a reputation for editorial authority over the years, especially after the disaster of discovering on my first day here that I was expected to replace Jason Brookes (ulp...), but *Super Play* has always been blessed in the dedication of its staff. The imperturbable JD, for instance, pitching his reserved and subtle style against the mycotoxic surrealism of James Tiberius Leach. Then there was Tony Mott, a man who seems to have led two lives – one involving lasses and beer and larks and stooff, the other accumulating an infinitesimal knowledge of computer and video games from the year dot with anorak diligence. Yes, it can be done.

And what can I possibly say about Wil Overfiend that hasn't already been posted on police billboards nationwide? Artist, designer, writer, illustrator, pad hogger – this man boasts more talent in his little finger than most people have in their, er, thumb. Although I really ought to tell you about the time (*Oi!* –Wil)

[quiet mutterings]

Ahem. Wil Overton is a splendid chap who has just demonstrated his outstanding and untarnishable character by inviting me round for a blast on his spanking new N64. In the meantime...

Don't put up with shoddy journalism. *Super Play* might be vanishing now but as long as you refuse to accept half-researched news, "this kicks butt" prose and (cough) the evils of advertorial, it will return in some form. One day.

Tony Mott, ex-dep ed and now dep ed on the authoritative Edge magazine, looks back over his life and how Super Play changed it forever . . .

Two-and-a-half years ago, when I was but a humble punter, I was buying *Super Play* myself. I did this because I was bonkers about the SNES, and the mag was so far ahead of its competitors that it almost defied belief. I remember collaring Matt Bielby at a Future Entertainment Show and, sad git that I was, telling him what was great about *Super Play*, what was merely fine about it, and what could do with improving. I didn't think then that I'd be writing half of the bugger about 14 months later...

Moving from the role of (hnngh) account executive at a printing firm to staff writer on *Super Play* was a bit of a culture shock. Suddenly work didn't start at 8:00am and finish at 5:30pm, rather it began at 9:30am and ended, well, any time between 6:00pm and 12:00am. But I enjoyed being a part it – the late-night fast-food runs, the crappy coffee machines, the clinkerish, obscure Japanese imports that always seemed to land on my overloaded desk... Aah, happy memories.

Most importantly, though, some of the people I've worked with during SPlay's lifetime truly are the best in their field, and I know I'd never have met their like working at any other games mag pubisher. My two closest SPlay cronies, Wil and Zy, deserve special credit – the Overtonster for his unmatched enthusiasm, mastery of design and crayon-wielding, and total appreciation of what makes Japanese culture so attractive; and Zy for his scarily comprehensive approach to everything, his knowledge and insight of what makes a game work (which sometimes surprises me), and ability to make even an often miserable bastard like me chuckle.

Part of *Super Play*'s strength, of course, is that it has supported what is perhaps the strongest gaming format ever. In the 20 years I've been into videogames I've played probably around 5000 games, but many of the best of those have appeared only on the SNES. And it's been a privilege to review some of them – games like *FFIII*, *Super Metroid* and *Yoshi's Island* – in these very pages.

I hope you've made the most of what's been given to you these last four years. Hold on to your back issues, because I fear you'll never see a mag anything like *Super Play* ever again. May your joypads never fail you, game-heads...

Staff writer of yore Jason Brookes, now editor of Edge magazine, presents our final tribute to Super Play . . .

It's particularly poignant that I should be writing this on the day I started working at Future Publishing exactly four years ago. I remember being interviewed by Neil West (my current partner in crime on *Edge*'s US sister magazine, Next Generation) who was looking for a writer on Mega. After explaining that the Mega Drive wasn't really my thing, I was hastily introduced to Matt Bielby who was looking to start up a Super Nintendo magazine. I remember desperately trying to impress Matt with my knowledge of the SNES and then huddling into his basement flat later that evening and showing him and fellow new recruit Jonathan Davies why the SNES had the world's greatest videogames.

Creating *Super Play* was an exciting time for me. I was writing about a subject I was passionate about, I was working with Matt and Jonathan (two of the most creative editorial brains in the company), and I got paid to do something I had previously considered to be a hobby. Only the hours were lousy. What mattered most, though, was the credibility that the magazine quickly earned. Initially competing with about four other SNES magazines, *Super Play* never had the market to itself but its unique design, warm humour and unrivalled authority combined to form a magazine loved by those who read it.

The move to *Edge* after issue nine of *Super Play* assured that I could keep abreast of the latest developments in videogaming, however, no issue of *Edge* has ever given me as much pleasure as those early *Super Plays*. It's sad but timely that just as the launch of Super Play celebrated the SNES's supremacy, its closure coincides with the arrival of Nintendo's next world-beating console. Goodbye *Super Play*. Gulp.

Those who have also served

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● Axelay £10, Alien 3 £15, Ghouls and Ghosts £15, Starwing (no inlay) £9, Super NBA Basketball £15, Judge Dredd £20, Slam Masters £20, Mickey Mouse £12, Illusion of Time £15, Super Punch Out £12, Write to Mal, 146 The Beeches, Cruddlers Park, Newcastle Under Tyne NE4 7HD

● Breath of Fire 2 (US) box and instructions, mint condition £40 ONO. Phone Craig 0191 4281441 after 5pm.

● Taz Mania (UK) £18, Prince of Persia (UK) £18, Super Off-Road (UK) £18, Actraiser (US) £18, The Lost Vikings (UK) £18, Battle Toads (UK) £17, Pierre Le Chef (UK) £17, Best of the Best (UK) £17, Tel: Alan 01968 676519

● UK game for sale - Illusion of Time, RPG, brand new condition only £25 ono. Ring on weekends - Richard Howard 01705 462793

● Soul Blazer (US) £20 boxed with instructions or will swap for Total Football on Mega Drive or Fever Pitch Soccer on Mega Drive. Write to: D Brooks, 1 Bentinck Street, Sutton in Ash, Notts NG17 4AZ

● Theme Park (UK) box and instructions £30 ono or I will swap for Chrono Trigger, Earthbound or Breath of Fire 2 (US). Ask for Paul on 01772 746250

● Starwing £12, Zelda III £10, Super Metroid £15, Mario Kart £15. All games in VGC with box and instructions (Zelda has no instructions. Or I will swap for decent games. Phone Alex Jones 01634 845942

● Zombies, Equinox, Zelda, Starwing, Flashback, DKC Mystic, Quest, EWJ, Secret of Mana, Illusion of Time, Super Empire Strikes Back (no instructions) £15-£25. Ask for Colin 0171 435 1939.

● US RPG for sale. Earthbound £30, Ogre Battle £25 includes p & p. Please phone Monday - Wednesday 12 pm to 5pm only: S Law - 01363 773023

● Illusion of Gaia £30, SOM £25, Chrono Trigger £40, Final Fantasy II and III £40 and £45, FF, Mystic Quest £15, Shadow Run £20, all US, Good condition, also MK II (UK) £15 call 01792 202621

WANTED

● Chrono Trigger - Ask for Olly 01293 406235

● Dragon Ball Z (first RPG for the Super Famicom). I will pay £15 - £20. Also DBZ Cantonese TV Episodes (mainly the early ones with Raditz, Vegeta, Freezer) Phone Larkay Tang - 01923 253756

● Game Boy games wanted - All offers considered. If you are interested, phone Ian on 0181 890 1632. Thanks!

● USA SNES, games not necessary. Will to pay up to £60. Please phone 01243 841660 now! Ask for Simon

● SNES games: Super Mario World (US) £5, Zelda III (US) £10, Super SF II (US) £10, Super Puyo (US, Jap) £10, Super Puzzle Bobble (US, Jap) £10. Boxes and instructions. Phone Dee: 0181 856 5838

● FF II, Earthbound, Front Mission. Will pay £40, £35, £45 respectively. Write to Mel, 146 The Beeches, Cruddos Park, Newcastle Under Tyne NE4 7HD

● US games wanted; Chrono Trigger, FFIII, Breath of Fire I and 2, will pay £40 per game. Ring D Green 0114 2883036 after 2pm

● Star Trek Next Generation UK (SNES) game wanted now by sad trekker, must work all the way through without bugs, will pay up to £30!!!! Get that rubbish game off your hands. Call Mark 01939 250115

● Chrono Trigger (UK) or Final Fantasy 3. Will pay up to £40 each. Call after 5pm, ask for Greg on 0181 531 1184 (London area only).

● Anyone interested in contributing towards a new fanzine (new horizon) covering RPGs, anime etc., please contact Chris 01484 513035 for more information.

● I will swap my ISS, Primal Rage, Jelly Boy and lots more games for any decent SNES games you may have. Call 01224 898482 - Ask for Liam. No time wasters.

● SNES games for sale. Earthworm Jim £25, Donkey Kong Country £25, Mortal Kombat 2 £25, International Superstar Soccer £25, Super Star Wars £20, Lost Vikings £20, Flashback £20, WWF £10, MK £10. Jed Wells 01566 86962

MISCELLANEOUS SALES

● SNES games only £10.00 each. Sensi Soccer, Madden 95, Contra III, Stunt Face FX, Parodius, Alfred Chicken, Kid Clown, Zombies, T2 Arcade, Skyblazer, Starwing and 20 more. Call Phil - 0181 281 0095 eves.

● Super Play Issues 28-46. £1 each or any 5 for £4, 10 for £7 or all for £10 or swap for 1 game. Call Richard 01328 820 716

● PC CD Rom games - Inferno £10, Beneath a Steel Sky £10, Creature Shock £10, Cyberia £18, Lands of Lore £7, Pacific Air War £8. Call Stefan Smith 0121 544 5329

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SWAPS

● I will swap 7th Saga, Prince of Persia or IOG (all US) for Secret of Evermore (US). Must be boxed and instructions. Tel 01734 782642 and ask for Andrew (evenings)

● I will swap FIFA 96 plus International Superstar Soccer for any Micro Machines game. Sorry no boxes but both have instructions. Call William Frost 01409 241117

● I will swap Illusion of Time, Legend of Mystical Ninja and Cybernator (unboxed) for FFIII. My 3 games for your 1! Phone Joel Chadwick 01598 763315

HARDWARE FOR SALE

● SNES for sale with 15 games inc Earthworm Jim, KI, DKC, and Return of the Jedi, 2 control pads, one multi-player adaptor. All for £250. Phone 01506 484278 and ask for Owen.

● (Mario World included) SNES

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● UK SNES for sale, mint condition, still boxed, 8 great games including Rock 'n' Roll Racing, Powerdrive, and NBA Jam and Multitap. £200 or vno. Or, swap for Sony Playstation with decent game and pad. Tel: 01562 882450

● SNES for sale (UK) plus 25 games all boxed. Quick sale £180 call Phil 0181 281 0095

● SNES (UK) with 8 games (Doom, Zelda, Yoshi's Island, Donkey Kong 2, Starwing etc) £150. Ask for Chris 01609 774557

● Game Boy, 7 games and Super Game Boy. Mostly boxed with instructions all UK. £85.00. Alex Jones 01634 845942

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● Game Boy and six great games including: Gremlins 2 (91%) Batman 2 (87%) SML (92%) all boxed with instructions. Plus, Navy SEALs (83%) Burai Fighter (84%) and Tetris (95%). Phone Ian on 0181 890 1632

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● UK SNES boxed with 2 joypads, 6 games: Donkey Kong Country 1 & 2, FIFA Soccer, Mario All Stars, Legend, Yoshi's Island, plus 10 mags £150. Tony Roberts 0802 445632

● SNES with 11 games including Yoshi's Island, Killer Instinct and Chrono Trigger. Has internal decider and 60 - 50hz switch 3 pads and converter. £200. Sarah H. 0117 9494193

● PC Power pad - £7, Yoshi's Cookie (GB) £5, Battle Toads (GB) £5, Dangerous Creatures (PC) £13, Artalive (SEGA) £20. NES depends on price offered. Ring Dom on 0181 482 4396.

● Game Gear and Jungle Book (no box or instructions) in mint condition - £15. Action Replay 2 - boxed and latest book of codes - £10. All incl postage. Tel: Peter 01903 783144

● Amiga 500+.1 joystick, mouse and mat, dust cover, power pack, 20 mags, over 100 games, some boxed in good condition. Sell for £170. Call Tom 01923 663076

● SNES for sale. 15 games incl MK3, Doom, Lethal Enforcers (with gun) scope 6 gun with 2 games, 2 pads, action replay, universal adaptor, all for £280. Call Tom 01923 663076

● UK SNES with eight games inc Turbo (96%) Stunt Race (93%) and Starfox (93%), 1 pad with auto fire/slo mo plus 3 adaptors plus multitap £300 ono. Call Alex on 0181 995 7579 after 6pm

● UK SNES, FFIII (£40) Starwing, Earthworm Jim 2 £30, Theme Park, all for £100. Other games for sale all boxed. Shaun Jones 01597 811348

● SNES (UK) plus 2 controller and SFX adaptors plus 9 games incl. SSFII (US) and Mario Kart all for only £150 ono phone Andy 01773 825187

● SNES with US/Jap converter, 2 control pads, carry case and 11 games incl Killer Instinct £150 ono. Tel 01509 232554 - S Wragg

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● XMen Dark Phoenix Saga, bound volume (9 books) £10, Ultra force Phoenix Resurrection £1. Spider Man and the Uncanny XMen (6 books) £10. Generation X, Tales of the Phelonx Covenant (10 books) £15. All mint. Write to Mal, 146 The Beeches, Cruddas Park, Newcastle Under Tyne NE4 7HD

● Er... Mr Shaheen you forgot your address! I'm waiting! Manafa Al Muhandis, Villa 777, Road 2418, Al-Eker 624 Bahrain

● Support your SNES! Game search service - information and availability of any SNES game ever released. SWC titles, too many to list, everything you can think of and more! All enquiries welcome, send SAE for details: Matt, 3 Honeysuckle Close, Kempshott, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG22 5RH

● Hi my name is Vicky, I'm 17 and looking for m/f pen-pals 16 - 100. I like Manga, Misc, SNES and Game Boy. Whatever your interests write now (photo if poss - Ta) Vicky James - 74 Pondtail Road, Horsham, W. Sussex RH12 5HR

● 16 year old Chinese male looking for Chinese male/female penpals aged 15 plus. Must be interested in computer games, Anime, etc - write to Karkay Tang, 36 Parkgate Road, Watford, Herts, WD2 4BR, England

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● Penpals wanted. 18 plus male or female. I like Madonna, videos, SNES and Emmerdale. Please write, reply guaranteed, I also like drawing. Andrew Clarkson 35 Moorland Road, Goole, North Humberside DN14 5TY

● Hey Joe! Yes you, Joe Lee, get your butt off that chair and write something for our fanzine. (Jonny Stannard)

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IRRESPONSIBLE picture

Hello again! It's nice to be back on Super Play, but very sad that this is the last issue. Still, neither Nintendo nor anime is going to go away, so even without this magnificent mag you'll be able to enjoy both for a long time yet. I'm not going to write an elegy because there are too many good things to come in the next few months, so no long faces, y'all hear me?

PRINCESS MINERVA

AD Vision

45 minutes (subtitled)

RRP: £12.99

Directed by Yoshihiro Yamaguchi and based on a PC Engine Super CD-ROM game, this nutty sword and sorcery romp features a brief but commanding performance by one of my favourite voice actors, Akio Otsuka (Batou from *Ghost in the Shell*), as the royal father of self-centred pose-freak Minerva.

Princess Minverva: "a sword and sorcery romp".

The Princess doesn't want to be a Princess, finds studying magic boring and would rather wing it, and is constantly getting her devoted bodyguard Blue Morris into hot water by ignoring dad's orders and letting Blue Morris take the heat. When she decides she wants to enter the Martial Arts Tournament as masked idol fighter Cutey Kamen, and to use the contest as a selection process for candidates for her new all-girl bodyguard corps, Blue Morris has to take her place in the Royal Box and is kidnapped by the elemental servants of the sorceress Dynastar by mistake. When they find out they haven't got the Princess, they use Blue Morris as bait in a magical trap – and Dynastar, unlike Minerva, is no slouch when it comes to serious magical study.

But why do she and her sorcery teacher have such a grudge against Minerva and her father? This OAV doesn't tell us, and the ending leaves the way open for a sequel. The characters include a bevy of babes of all sorts, but also feature a few tasty guys – Minerva's sensei is no dog and there's an insanely heroic blond swordsman too. Action, magic, a little inoffensive nudity and some bouncy music keep the lightweight but enjoyable story ticking over nicely, and, of course, the open ending is a happy one, with Minerva realising the error of her ways thanks to the good example of Blue Morris and the strong, independent women around her and promising to be less selfish in future.

Helen McCarthy

12

7 out of 10

SUKEBAN DEKA

AD Vision

60 minutes (dubbed or subbed)

RRP: £12.99

***Sukeban Deka* (which translates roughly as 'bad girl cop') was a live-action series before it went to anime, and this first tape ends on a real cliffhanger, with heroine-with-attitude Saki and her wannabe boyfriend thrown into jail on suspicion of kidnapping the sweet, innocent Junko.**

The story opens in a reformatory, with inmate Saki blackmailed into going undercover at her old school to save her mother from execution. Armed with a only a yo-yo (ah, but what a yo-yo!) and without backup from her police controller, a tall, cool blond with hair way beyond regulation length, Saki has to uncover a plot whose dimensions are only hinted at but which involves many political and business interests and has already led to the cold-blooded murder of two coachloads of students and drug-pushing at school.

The villains of the piece are a trio of thoroughly nasty teenage sisters and their rich father, who have wormed their way into positions of power and influence under a facade of sweetness and light. The plot has a lot going for it – over-the-top pantomime evil, genuine tension and wacky moments – but the narrative jumps about quite a bit in the first ten minutes and this can make it hard to get into the story. The animation is fairly limited and the character designs (by Nobuteru Yuki) look dated against the glossy OAV art currently being produced. You'll need to stick with this one to see how it develops, but it looks as if the whole series could be intriguing, so give it some time and attention.

The cast of *Sukeban Deka* – and what a strange bunch they look...

Helen McCarthy

15

6 out of 10

SECRET OF MAMO

Manga Video

100 minutes approx (dubbed)

RRP: £13.99

More adventures of Lupin/Wolf in his first ever anime feature film, made in 1978 but still holding up well, packed with the style and wit we've come to expect from Monkey Punch's inimitable team of characters.

The style and panache of the design and camera work are powerful and the sharper, spikier chara designs really hit home, especially in contrast with the romantic, lyrical renderings in Miyazaki's *Cagliostro Castle*, also released on Manga Video in the UK.

The story has the usual labyrinthine complexity. Mamo, a tiny millionaire with an awful taste in suits and hairstyling, but a first-class eye for excellence in art, philosophy, architecture, literature and a host of other fields, has persuaded the lovely Fujiko to join him in trying to get hold of a mystical stone from a Pharoah's tomb which guarantees immortality and eternal youth. They hire Wolf to do the job – but didn't Wolf die in Transylvania? Inspector Zenigata doesn't think so and is still hot on the trail of the master-thief. Turns out that Mamo has not one but two secret identities – he's Foward Furst, the multi-billionaire who owns a third of the world, and he's also a ten-thousand-year-old intelligence who means to make himself a god and bribes Fujiko with the promise of eternal beauty – her lifelong dream. But Wolf has a dream of his own and he pursues it through all the insanity of a helicopter chase in Paris, an art-gallery island in the Carribean, a roach-ridden apartment in Colombia and an earthquake in Mamo's missile silo. He even risks his friendship with longtime associates Jigen and Goemon for it. What is it? Something to melt the heart of even the most hardened anti-romantic ... I'd rate this superb film slightly below the wonderful *Bye Bye Liberty*, coming soon from Manga Video, but for style, action, humour, and pace it rates a big gold star.

Don't miss it.

Helen McCarthy

12

8 out of 10

IP NEWSLINE

MIYAZAKI IN ORBIT

Yes, two of the master's films have finally showed up in the UK – on satellite, but it's a start. If you can get the Movie Channel, chances are you've already seen *Porco Rosso* and *My Neighbour Totoro*, which premiered in June. (If there's a better place to see *Porco Rosso* than Portmeirion, take me there! I watched the premiere in a pastel-washed, sun-bathed Italianate cottage overlooking pale sands fringed by blue seas ... just perfect.) The dubs and prints were good, but the information in the TV listings was misleading – *Totoro* is described as a 1993 film and *Porco Rosso* as an "Italian superhero cartoon"!

THE NEXT "NEXT AKIRA"?

When most anime magicians put their hands in their hats you expect them to pull out their usual rabbit. With Katsuhiro Otomo you've no idea what will come out. His follow-up to *Akira* was *Roujin Z*, which came as a shock to everyone who'd been expecting another blast of cybermayhem but was a terrific film in its own right. Now, after the success of his SF anthology *Memories*, the cheeky chap has done it again. The new Otomo, *Steam Boy*, might be summed up as *Akira* meets *The Secret of Blue Water* and Nick Park for a magnificently-researched steampunk epic. It features a team-up between Lancastrian steam genius George Stephenson and James Ray Stim, schoolboy son of an inventor whose energy sphere threatens the world. From the rousing opening bars of The British Grenadiers at the beginning of the credits to the plethora of Victorian detail, it looks as if Otomo has once again confounded every expectation.

NEXT FROM PIONEER

As the deadline for this column hits me like a brick wall that jumped out in front of the car a minute ago, honest officer, we still don't know what the next Pioneer release will be. *The Hakkenden* is favourite among betting men right now, but *El Hazard* is also strongly backed and the elegantly wacky *Phantom Quest Corp* may sneak in. I expect we'll see them all eventually, but in what order is still a moot point. Meanwhile look forward to the concluding part of *Armitage III* in which Armitage's most unexpected secret is revealed.

NEW YEAR PARTY

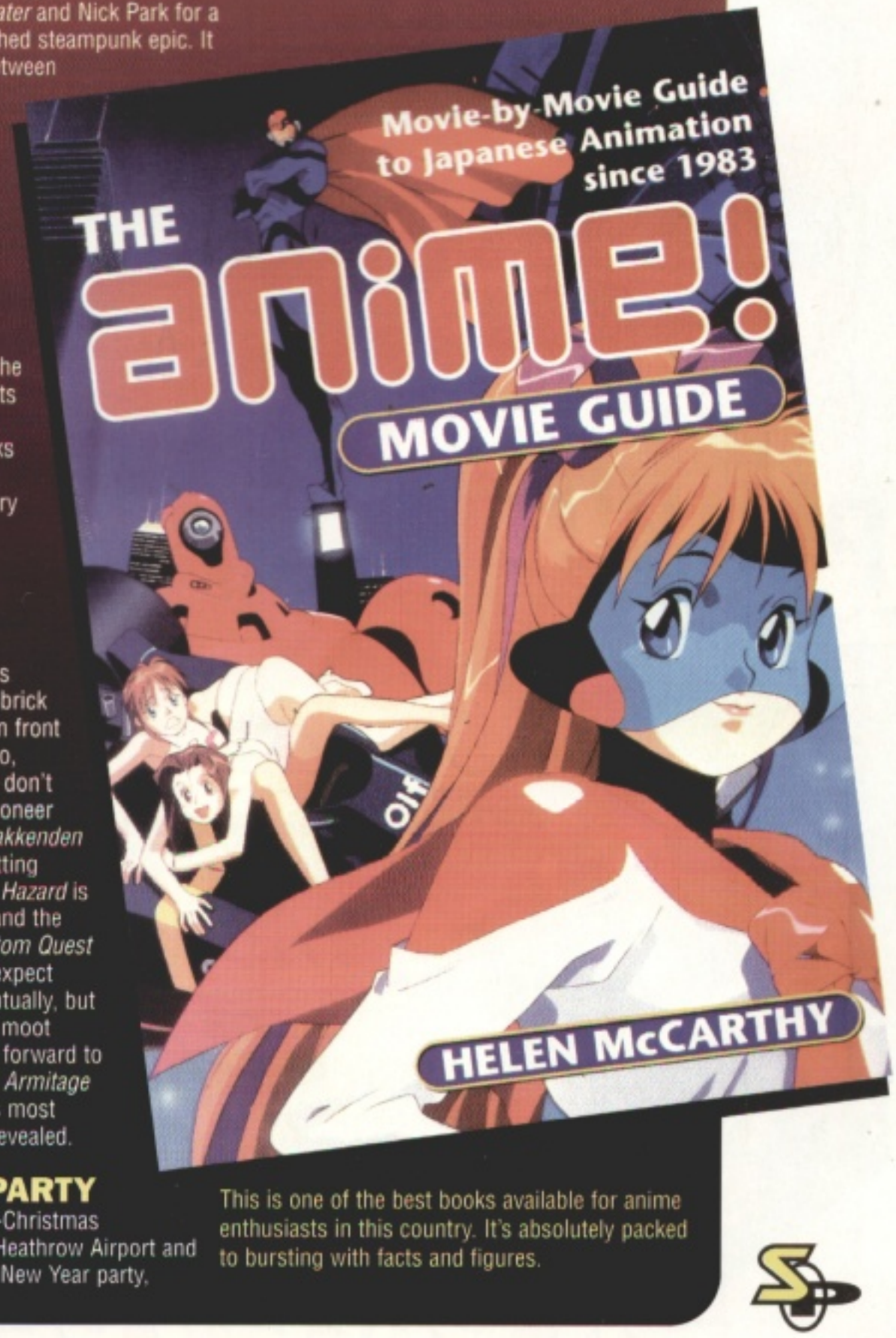
If you hate those post-Christmas blues, come down to Heathrow Airport and join anime's very own New Year party, Shinnenkai. From 3rd to 5th January there'll be guests, screenings, art to see, goodies to buy, panels, costume play, crazy games and maybe even a pool party in the Radisson Edwardian's luxurious swim 'n' hot tub lounge. Some very special people have been invited over from Japan and the USA, as well as a contingent of UK anime guests including *Super Play*'s Wil Overton, art god Steve Kyte, translator Jonathan Clements and yours truly. You can get details by sending a stamped self-addressed envelope to Jonathan Weeks, SHINNENKAI, 65 The High, Streatham High Road, London SW16, or by emailing melmoth@argonet.co.uk.

SHOCK TREATMENT

Latest from Kiseki is that the BBFC have passed *Rei Rei* uncut as a 15 certificate ...

SHAMELESS PLUG

Until you find a substitute for the huge gap *Super Play* is going to leave in your life, why not read a chapter of my new book every month? It's called *The Anime Movie Guide*, it features lots of movies and OAVs made between 1983 and 1995, it costs just £9.99 for a massive 288 pages and it's out now from Titan Books.



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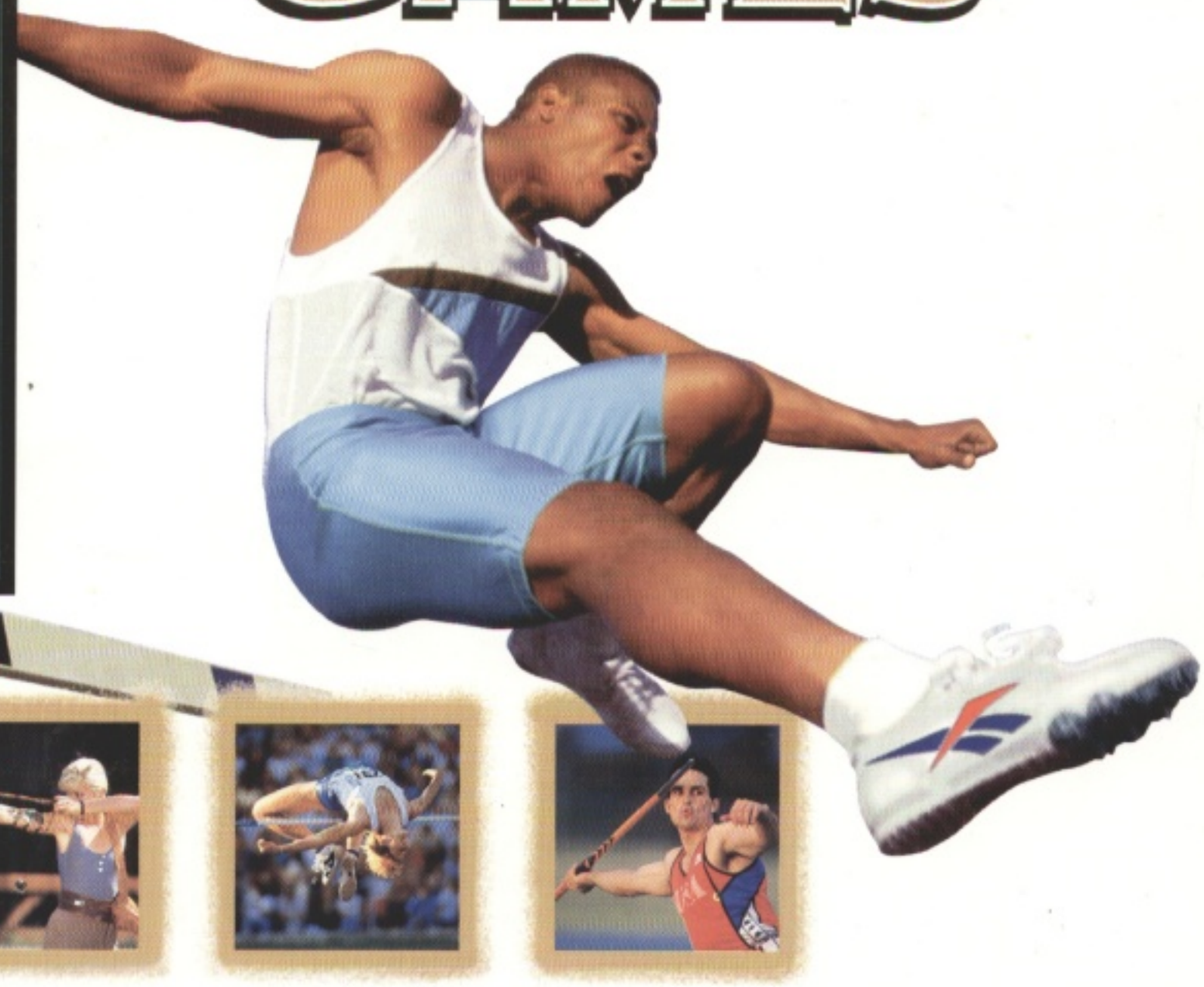

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